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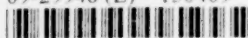
General Assembly
Tenth emergency special session
Agenda item 5**Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and
the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory****Security Council**
Sixty-fourth year**Identical letters dated 8 April 2009 from the Permanent Observer
of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the
Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council**

The situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, continues to be extremely volatile due to the illegal, aggressive, destructive and provocative policies and practices of Israel, the occupying Power. In this regard, I must draw your attention specifically to the ongoing acts of violence and terror being perpetrated against the Palestinian civilian population by Israeli settlers, illegally transferred to the Occupied Territory and clearly constituting part of the occupying force.

The most recent incident involves an attack today by armed Israeli settlers from the illegal settlement of "Beit Ein", who went on a rampage against Palestinian civilians in the village of Khirbat Safa, north of Al-Khalil (Hebron). The early morning attack, during which settlers fired indiscriminately on Palestinian homes and civilians, left at least 38 Palestinians injured, including one critically, Tha'er Nasser Aadi, 18 years old, who is now in hospital struggling for his life after being shot in the neck.

Similar to previous such terror attacks, this rampage was perpetrated under the protection of the Israeli occupying soldiers, who only intervened to guarantee the safe return of the assailants to their illegal settlement. Indeed, instead of providing protection for the safety and well-being of the civilian population in Khirbat Safa, as the occupying Power is obligated to do under international humanitarian law, the occupying forces allowed this attack to be carried out and even participated in it, firing live ammunition, tear gas and rubber-coated steel bullets at the civilians. Moreover, the occupying forces proceeded to seize eight Palestinian homes in Khirbat Safa and Beit Umar to use as military outposts.

While the situation with the illegal Israeli settlers has been consistently volatile and dangerous in and around the area of Al-Khalil, numerous such incidents are occurring regularly across the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem. Today, in a shocking display of extremism, hundreds of



fanatical Israeli settlers descended upon the Old City, including onto Al-Haram Al-Sharif, confronting and injuring several Palestinians and threatening further attacks on Muslim holy places. This was preceded by other incidents in Occupied East Jerusalem, where illegal Israeli settlers, backed by soldiers, attacked Palestinians in the Sa'diyya neighbourhood on 4 April 2009, injuring several civilians. That attack was followed by an invasion by a terrorist settler group of the home of the Jabir family, which evicted the family and seized the home by force.

In this regard, it is imperative to note that the escalation of settler violence and terror is occurring in tandem with escalating illegal settlement construction and expansion as well as the intensification of all other illegal colonization measures, including the construction of the Wall, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The situation is most severe in areas in and around Occupied East Jerusalem, where Israel, the occupying Power, has been feverishly carrying out illegal activities and measures for the direct purpose of altering the demographic composition, character and legal status of the city, including by de-populating the city of its Palestinian inhabitants through forced evictions, home demolitions and other means and measures intended to make it nearly impossible and totally unbearable for them to continue living there, thus advancing the city's Judaization and entrenching its illegal control of it. We have repeatedly drawn attention to the continuation and intensification of all of these illegal activities, which are seriously destabilizing the situation on the ground, inflaming tensions between the two sides and jeopardizing any prospects for physically realizing the two-State solution for peace.

Israel's illegal settlement colonization campaign and the settlers residing within the settlements are funded, protected, and armed by the Israeli government, which has transferred and enabled them to live in these illegal settlements in grave breach of international law, including in particular the Fourth Geneva Convention, and which allows them to commit such crimes against defenceless Palestinians throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory with absolute impunity. The lawlessness of the settlers, including deadly violence, terror, harassment and intimidation against Palestinian civilians and their properties, is facilitated, aided and abetted by the occupying Power, which bears full responsibility for the illegal presence and all the illegal actions of the settlers.

The provisions and principles of international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, are clear in this regard. Israel, the occupying Power, must be demanded to cease its illegal colonization campaign in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and comply scrupulously with all of its legal obligations in this regard, particularly under the Fourth Geneva Convention. It must also act forthwith to reign in and bring an end to the terror campaign being perpetrated by the Israeli settlers against the Palestinian civilian population under occupation.

Continuation of the current unjust, illegal situation will only further exacerbate the tense situation on the ground in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, further stoking anger and rage, deepening mistrust and further endangering the dwindling prospects for a peaceful settlement of this conflict. This explosive situation thus requires urgent attention and serious action by the international community, including by the Security Council in accordance with its responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security, for the future potential for peace and security demand that such core issues be immediately and thoroughly addressed.

The present letter is in follow-up to our previous 336 letters to you regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 6 March 2009 (A/ES-10/451-S/2009/130), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, State terrorism and systematic human rights violations committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Dr. Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer

**Security Council**

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**Letter dated 9 April 2009 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of
the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the
United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council**

Upon instructions from my Government and with reference to the letters addressed to the President of the Security Council by the Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations, including the letters circulated in documents S/2008/296, S/2008/344, S/2008/609 and S/2009/145 and the annexes to the said letters, regarding the three Iranian islands in the Persian Gulf, I have the honour to state the following:

The Iranian islands of Abu Musa, Greater Tunb and Lesser Tunb are integral and eternal parts of the Iranian territory, and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran categorically rejects any claim to the contrary, including the baseless claims raised in the said letters and their annexes. Moreover, my Government stresses that all measures taken by the Iranian authorities in those Iranian islands are fully based on the sovereign rights of Iran and the principle of its territorial integrity, and are in accordance with the ongoing arrangements emanating from the documents exchanged in 1971.

While stressing the importance of the brotherly and good-neighbourly relations that so happily exist between the two countries, the Islamic Republic of Iran continues to believe that constructive negotiations between the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the relevant officials of the United Arab Emirates will lead to the further expansion of relations in various fields and will help to remove any misunderstanding that may arise with regard to implementation of the arrangements emanating from the documents exchanged in 1971.

Moreover, the Islamic Republic of Iran wishes to stress that the only correct and historically and universally recognized name for the sea area between Iran and the Arabian Peninsula, as also emphasized by the United Nations itself, is the Persian Gulf, and, accordingly, any use of fabricated names for this body of water, including the fabricated name used in the aforementioned letters of the Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations and their annexes, is totally groundless and absolutely unacceptable and is of no legal or political value.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Eshagh Al Habib
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.



Security Council

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Twentieth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire

I. Introduction

1. By its resolution 1865 (2009), the Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) and the French Licorne force until 31 July 2009, and requested me to report on the situation in Côte d'Ivoire and on progress towards achieving the benchmarks for a possible phased drawdown of the troop levels of UNOCI. The present report provides an update, since my nineteenth report on UNOCI of 8 January 2009 (S/2009/21), on major developments as at 2 April 2009. The benchmarks and indicators of progress are set out in annex I to the present report.

II. Security situation

2. The overall security situation in Côte d'Ivoire has remained stable, with largely unhindered freedom of movement of people, goods and services throughout the country, although several incidents during the reporting period highlighted the continuing fragility of the security situation in the country. Violent clashes between members of the Fédération estudiantine et scolaire de Côte d'Ivoire and rival student groups frequently disrupted public order. In March 2009, the Young Patriots staged demonstrations against the sanctions regime imposed on their leader, Charles Blé Goudé. However, the situation remained peaceful, including further to calls by the Young Patriots in San-Pédro for the withdrawal of UNOCI forces from the town. Meanwhile, identification agents on strike in several areas seized sensitive voter registration materials, including data collected during identification and voter registration operations. A group of demonstrators seized identification equipment from a UNOCI vehicle in Duékoué.

3. The continued presence of armed militias, the incomplete disarmament of former combatants of the Forces nouvelles, the proliferation of small arms and the difficulties faced in the efforts to move forward the reunification of the security forces and the restoration of effective State authority throughout the country have the potential to adversely affect the peace process, if not addressed carefully and urgently.

4. Strikes in several public service branches, including education, civil administration and health services, disrupted the effective functioning of State



administration and delivery of basic services. On 23 March, the leader of the opposition party, Mouvement des forces de l'avenir, Innocent Anaky Kobena, made a public statement urging the overthrow of President Laurent Gbagbo, following which he was briefly detained and interrogated by security services.

III. Status of implementation of the Ouagadougou Political Agreement

5. In the two years since the signing of the Ouagadougou Agreement in March 2007 significant progress has been made towards restoring normalcy in Côte d'Ivoire. The main achievements include the end of hostilities between the Forces nouvelles and the national defence and security forces; the removal of the zone of confidence that had previously physically divided the country; the restoration of free movement of people and goods throughout the country; the ongoing successful conduct of a credible process to identify the population and register voters; the overall improvement of the human rights situation throughout the country; sustained dialogue among the main political leaders; the gradual return to the north of State officials displaced during the conflict; the encouraging rebounding of the economy; and technical preparations for the elections.

6. Côte d'Ivoire is now at a stage where only two critical processes need to be completed in order to restore normalcy: reunification and elections. As noted in my previous report, the fourth supplementary agreement to the Ouagadougou Agreement, signed on 22 December 2008, outlined the way forward to the completion of the reunification process and the conduct of the elections. The agreement set out the modalities and provided a timeline for completing the following key tasks: (a) the disarmament of the former combatants of the Forces nouvelles and the dismantling of the militias, two months before the elections; (b) the reunification of Ivorian defence and security forces; and (c) the effective redeployment of State administration throughout the country, including the corps préfectoral (local authorities), the judiciary and the fiscal and customs administration. The fourth supplementary agreement thereby reversed the sequence previously established in the third supplementary agreement, which had provided for elections to be conducted before the completion of the reunification processes.

A. Reunification

7. The parties have not been able to meet the deadlines set for completing the processes set out in the fourth supplementary agreement and have made very limited progress towards their implementation. My Special Representative has actively engaged with key Ivorian leaders to exchange views on ways to advance the peace process. He also consulted with the Facilitator, President Blaise Compaoré of Burkina Faso, who has reaffirmed his commitment to help accelerate the peace process with a view to holding elections in 2009. Discussions are also continuing among the parties on ways to overcome the differences that are impeding progress. The leadership of the Forces nouvelles held a seminar in January to discuss the implementation of the fourth supplementary agreement. Prime Minister Guillaume Soro, in turn, conducted sensitization visits to areas controlled by the Forces nouvelles in February.

8. The meeting of the Permanent Consultative Framework scheduled to take place on 11 March was postponed until April. However, on 16 March, the Facilitator, President Compaoré of Burkina Faso, met with President Laurent Gbagbo and Prime Minister Soro to discuss ways of resolving the issues impeding progress in the implementation of the fourth supplementary agreement. President Gbagbo subsequently convened a series of meetings on 23 and 24 March with high-ranking officers of the national defence and security forces and the Forces nouvelles to discuss ways of breaking the impasse on the reunification of the country, including the reunification and redeployment of the defence and security forces, the transfer of authority from the Forces nouvelles zone commanders to the corps préfectoral and the redeployment of the administration, including magistrates, customs and financial institutions. A joint working group was established by the integrated command centre to review a series of proposals on modalities for the reunification.

9. Uneven progress was made in the efforts to restore State authority throughout the country, including the fiscal, customs and judicial administration. On 4 March, Prime Minister Soro inaugurated a "guichet unique" in Bouaké, collocating customs, fiscal and registration services. However, a ceremony to mark the transfer of authority from the Forces nouvelles zone commanders to the corps préfectoral, expected to take place on the same day, was postponed owing to the differences between the parties over the implementation modalities. The Forces nouvelles zone commanders therefore remain, de facto, in control of the local administration.

10. Meanwhile, nearly all judges and prosecutors were nominated and redeployed to the north, with the exception of six key positions, for which a presidential decree is still pending in spite of an agreement reached between the Ministry of Justice and the Conseil supérieur de la magistrature. The redeployment of court clerks and penitentiary personnel has yet to be completed, although nearly 100 corrections officers have been trained and are available for redeployment. Other factors continue to hamper the effective functioning of the judiciary in the north, including the insufficient presence of police and gendarmerie forces, poorly equipped or secured court premises and the need to rehabilitate court buildings. Eleven detention facilities in the north were rehabilitated and handed over to Ivorian authorities in January 2009. However, conditions of detention, including food and medicine shortages and overcrowding, remained of grave concern throughout Côte d'Ivoire. Public safety continued to be adversely affected by frequent prison breaks, as illustrated by the escape of 98 prisoners from Abengourou prison on 22 February.

11. No further major progress was made in disarming Forces nouvelles combatants beyond the regrouping operations described in my last report. The adoption of a presidential decree to operationalize the provisions of the fourth supplementary agreement pertaining to the future of Forces nouvelles rank and file in the national army remains outstanding. However, some progress has been made in the reinsertion of the already registered combatants. The national civic service programme launched its training programme for youth at risk and ex-militias in the west of the country. Operations to profile and dismantle pro-Government militias, conducted by the integrated command centre and the national programme for reinsertion and community rehabilitation, have been launched in the western, eastern and southern parts of the country. Disarmament of militia elements in this phase is being carried out on a voluntary basis, and although sensitization efforts are ongoing to promote

the handover of weapons, ammunition and other military items, almost none have been surrendered.

12. The national institutions established to implement the disarmament and reintegration of former combatants and militias continue to face financial and operational capacity constraints which have hindered their activities. In addition, the parties are yet to formally endorse the results of the profiling operations as there are persisting differences on the number of former combatants and militias in the country. The availability of funds and payment modalities of the \$1,000 demobilization package to eligible Forces nouvelles and militia elements remains unclear. Meanwhile, UNOCI, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and with resources from the Peacebuilding Fund, continued to support the reintegration process through the implementation of 335 microprojects benefiting a total of 1,180 ex-combatants, women and youth-at-risk.

B. Elections

13. As of 31 March, a total of 5.9 million Ivorians had been identified and registered as voters at the 10,730 registration centres opened, out of the 11,133 planned, countrywide. The identification and voter registration operations, including for Ivorians living abroad, continued to be marred by significant logistical, financial and procedural obstacles. Launched on 15 September 2008, the process was due to end on 31 March after several extensions, but required further prolongation to allow for the conduct of remedial operations to include areas not yet sufficiently covered and to register those affected by the reconstitution of lost or destroyed civil registers. The administrative phase of the operation for the reconstitution of lost or destroyed civil registers was launched on 27 January, and all but one of the 255 commissions were operational throughout the country by the end of March. Out of a total of 105,000 petitions received, some 41,000 have been approved and some 5,000 rejected thus far. The requests approved by the administrative commissions will be reviewed by judicial commissions following the end of the administrative phase.

14. On 29 March 2009, the Independent Electoral Commission announced the postponement of the registration of Ivorians abroad to an unspecified date owing to financial constraints encountered by SAGEM, a private French company and technical operator. Moreover, the Commission specified that remedial identification operations countrywide, initially planned for the beginning of April 2009, would take place in mid-April. The Commission also indicated that it had developed a draft electoral timeline during its meeting on 27 February 2009. This timeline is contingent, however, on several prerequisites, which, according to its Chairman, are not within the purview of the Commission, including the need to fill the funding gap in its budget for the holding of the elections, the timeline for completing the reconstitution of lost and destroyed registers and the effective functioning of the first instance tribunals in the Forces nouvelles-held areas in order to settle legal disputes.

15. As indicated in my previous report, and as emphasized by my Special Representative, this electoral timeline should consist of five key stages: (a) the publication of the provisional voters list at the end of the voter registration operations; (b) the publication of the final voters' list after the conclusion of the

electoral appeals process; (c) the production of identification and voter cards; (d) the distribution of identification and voter cards; and (e) the electoral campaigning period. During the last meeting of the Permanent Consultative Framework of the Ouagadougou Agreement on 10 November, the Chairman of the Independent Electoral Commission was requested to develop and announce, by 31 December 2008, a new timeline for the completion of the identification and voter registration processes, as well as a new date for the elections. During the sixth meeting of the Evaluation and Monitoring Committee in Ouagadougou on 16 February, participants, with full support from my Special Representative, urged the Commission to make public a realistic timeline for elections in 2009. No progress has been made in this regard, however, due, in particular, to the fact that the follow-up meeting of the Permanent Consultative Framework that was initially scheduled to convene in January to discuss the new timeline was postponed on two occasions. The meeting is now expected to take place in April.

16. At the request of the Independent Electoral Commission and other technical operators, and to help address the many logistical challenges, UNOCI continued to provide substantial airlift capacity as well as maritime and ground transportation for identification agents and equipment in the framework of "operation transport". However, in mid-March, identification and voter registration operations started to encounter serious setbacks when staff of SAGEM went on strike to protest arrears in the payment of their allowances, a situation caused by delays in the payment of approximately \$70 million to the company by the Ivorian Government. Furthermore, delays in the effective redeployment of the judiciary to Forces nouvelles-controlled areas meant that a large number of registration applicants were unable to obtain their registration documents.

17. Meanwhile, UNOCI's international observation coordination cell, created pursuant to Security Council resolution 1765 (2007), has become fully operational. Thus far only the Carter Center has deployed staff to observe the identification and voter registration processes. In February, the European Union conducted an assessment mission to prepare for a possible large-scale observation mission. It is expected that the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the International Organization of la Francophonie will also establish international election observation missions.

IV. Financial support for the implementation of the Ouagadougou Agreement

18. Efforts to mobilize funds to support the implementation of the Ouagadougou Agreement continued. The two basket funds established and administered by UNDP to support the electoral process and post-crisis peace consolidation activities are fully operational and continue to receive external funding from an increasingly diverse donor base. To date, UNDP has raised over \$95 million for the two funds from the Governments of Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Japan, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, as well as from ECOWAS and the European Union. Of the \$73 million earmarked for the basket fund for elections, some \$11 million has been disbursed thus far. Meanwhile, the \$22 million raised for the basket fund dedicated to supporting the Government's "programme de sortie de crise" have already been disbursed in support of various

programmes implemented under the Ouagadougou Agreement, including for the redeployment of State administration, the return of internally displaced persons and the reinsertion programmes for former combatants. As of 31 March 2009, no further contribution had been made to the second basket fund.

V. Deployment of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire

A. Military component

19. As at 31 March, UNOCI's military strength stood at 8,024 personnel, comprising 7,745 troops, 187 military observers and 92 staff officers, including 102 women. Pursuant to Security Council resolution 1865 (2009), UNOCI has developed a reconfiguration plan under which one battalion from Bangladesh has been earmarked for repatriation. The repatriation, which is scheduled to take place before the end of June, would leave UNOCI's troop level at 7,450. Meanwhile, the French Government has decided to withdraw its engineering company deployed within UNOCI by the end of April. Efforts to generate new engineering capabilities are under way.

20. Under UNOCI's force reconfiguration plan, a reserve of one rapidly deployable battalion will be based in Yamoussoukro in the form of an airborne quick reaction detachment, while the main component of the force will remain deployed in Abidjan and in the west. In addition, UNOCI and the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) have started discussions, within the framework of Security Council resolution 1609 (2005), on arrangements for the temporary deployment of military and air capability reinforcements from UNMIL to UNOCI should the need arise during the election period.

21. As announced by the French Government in January, the French Licorne force, while maintaining its quick reaction capability to support UNOCI, is currently in a drawdown process, due to be completed in June, when the strength of the force is expected to be reduced to 900 personnel from its previous level of 1,800.

22. In the interim, the redeployment of UNOCI troops to consolidate their position in 24 camps was completed by the end of February 2009. The force increased its mobility to better contribute to securing and supporting the implementation of the Ouagadougou Agreement, including the identification and voter registration operations and, thereafter, the elections. The force also continued to support the integrated command centre in order to enhance its capabilities to plan and conduct security operations through its mixed units, which consist of national defence and security forces and elements of the Forces nouvelles. In addition, the UNOCI force regularly conducted simultaneous and coordinated patrols with UNMIL along the border with Liberia.

B. Police component

23. As at 31 March, UNOCI's police strength stood at 1,112 personnel against an authorized ceiling of 1,200, comprising 362 United Nations police officers and 750 personnel in six formed police units. Of these, 18 were female officers. The police

component continued to assist Ivorian police forces in the conduct of their operations throughout the country and to provide strategic advice and overall security for the peace process. The 600 auxiliary personnel from the Forces nouvelles trained by UNOCI in 2006 and the six mixed police units deployed along the former zone of confidence were assisted by UNOCI in the conduct of investigations. In addition, more than 30 capacity-building projects for Ivorian law enforcement agencies were initiated in collaboration with various stakeholders, including in the areas of crowd control and training in forensics. UNOCI police officers also supported the mission's integrated embargo monitoring activities. Finally, as part of its efforts to reinforce its presence throughout the country, UNOCI's police component opened deployment sites in Adzopé and Daoukro in the east and Divo in the west.

VI. Humanitarian situation

24. While an estimated 76,671 internally displaced persons have voluntarily returned to their areas of origin, land disputes and an overall weak social fabric pose a threat to the sustained pace of return and resettlement of the remaining internally displaced in the west. Meanwhile, critical humanitarian needs, requiring an overall \$37 million, face considerable funding shortfalls. The Central Emergency Response Fund allocated \$2 million towards meeting humanitarian needs arising from return of internally displaced persons and reintegration processes and towards activities aimed at addressing malnutrition and food insecurity in the north.

VII. Human rights

25. Intercommunity tensions, mainly in the west, and social unrest persisted throughout the country. Insecurity, in particular in western and northern parts of the country as well as in the former zone of confidence, resulted in grave human rights violations, including extortions, armed attacks against civilians, rape and killings. Government-controlled areas continued to witness political tensions and social unrest among socio-professional groups. Law enforcement officials continued to use disproportionate force against civilians. Violations of the freedom of opinion and expression and persisting dire conditions in overcrowded prisons have also been documented. In Forces nouvelles-controlled areas, frequent instances of property destruction, arbitrary arrest, unlawful detention, torture and ill-treatment were reported.

26. Violence against women and girls, including rape, female genital mutilation and trafficking, remained a serious cause of concern, particularly in the western part of the country and in the Vavoua region. Most perpetrators of violence against women enjoyed impunity countrywide due to corruption and the failure of the judicial system to address the issue adequately. UNOCI human rights officers continued to provide assistance to victims of violence with counselling and medical care, in collaboration with external partners.

VIII. Gender

27. UNOCI carried out activities to strengthen the capacity of the Ivorian national police to mainstream gender aspects in recruitment practices and overall integration of female personnel in the police force. The mission also provided financial and technical support to women associations addressing sexual and gender-based violence. UNOCI continued its efforts to mainstream a gender perspective in its programmes and activities by sensitizing staff on gender issues, training gender focal points and developing a mission-wide action plan for the implementation of Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008).

IX. Child protection

28. UNOCI continued to monitor and report on child protection issues, as well as to advocate with the parties to the conflict, pursuant to the provisions adopted by the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict in Côte d'Ivoire. In view of the prevalence of sexual violence against children, the mission called upon all parties to comply with applicable international obligations, to end impunity and to protect children from sexual violence. UNOCI welcomed an action plan submitted on 19 January 2009 by the Forces nouvelles, in which they committed themselves to combating sexual violence in areas under their control. Meanwhile, in a letter addressed to my Special Representative on 30 January 2009, militia groups in the west of the country expressed their willingness to join efforts to combat sexual violence. UNOCI continues to sensitize its staff on child protection concerns.

X. HIV/AIDS

29. Pursuant to Security Council resolution 1308 (2000), UNOCI continued to include HIV/AIDS awareness in its programmes and activities. From January to March 2009, 2,256 mission personnel received such training, 105 peer educators were trained to conduct sensitization activities and 491 mission personnel received voluntary counselling and testing services. In the framework of a joint prevention project targeting sex workers, the Government, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and UNOCI are formalizing arrangements with the local non-governmental organizations that are expected to implement the project. Finally, UNOCI continued to cooperate with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), UNDP and UNFPA to mainstream HIV/AIDS issues in the context of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes.

XI. Economic recovery

30. Economic growth in Côte d'Ivoire in 2009 is projected at 3.7 per cent. So far, Côte d'Ivoire's economy has shown considerable resilience to the global downturn, but there are indications of a slowdown in certain economic sectors, including mining and non-traditional exports, that is products other than coffee and cocoa. The Government has achieved progress on a range of structural measures in the public finance areas, as emphasized by a recent mission of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that focused on the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility preparations. The

mission positively assessed the macroeconomic and fiscal framework and provided a basis of the African Development Bank to approve an interim strategy for Côte d'Ivoire as well as an arrears clearance operation and budget support.

31. On 27 and 31 March 2009, respectively, the boards of IMF and of the World Bank endorsed the agreements signed between these institutions and the Ivorian Government under which the latter is expected to benefit from immediate budget support of \$100 million from the Fund and \$150 million from the Bank. In addition, the acknowledgement of the completion of the decision point under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative (HIPC) will allow the Ivorian Government to benefit from a debt cancellation of \$3 billion of its \$12.8 billion in public foreign debt in the coming years. Meanwhile, in January 2009, the Ivorian Government finalized its poverty reduction strategy paper, with the objective of reducing the country's poverty rate from 48.9 per cent in 2008 to 16.2 per cent in 2015. The \$35.29 billion strategy covers key aspects of development and emphasizes the main challenges in the areas of peace, security and governance; job creation, rural development and promotion of the private sector; and access to basic social services.

XII. Personnel conduct and discipline

32. In my fifteenth (S/2008/1) and seventeenth (S/2008/451) reports on UNOCI, I indicated that investigations were under way by the United Nations and troop-contributing countries into serious allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse committed by personnel of UNOCI military contingents previously stationed in Bouaké and Logoualé. These investigations have been completed and their findings have been shared with the concerned troop-contributing countries for consideration and appropriate action. Meanwhile, UNOCI continued to sensitize its staff members and the Ivorian public on my zero-tolerance policy regarding sexual exploitation and abuse.

XIII. Media monitoring and public information

33. UNOCI increased its outreach, including through the mission's radio station, ONUCI-FM, and local community radios, on the mission's role in supporting the peace process. Two new transmitters were installed in Adzopé and Divo as part of UNOCI's deployment to the area. In addition, UNOCI continued to sensitize the population on the identification and voter registration operations and to train local journalists in investigative journalism and conflict-sensitive reporting.

XIV. Safety and security of personnel

34. Despite the overall stable security situation in Côte d'Ivoire, recent incidents in both urban and rural areas indicated that substantial challenges persist in upholding the safety and security of United Nations personnel. On 8 January, armed robbers burglarized the residence of three staff of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Guiglo. On 20 February, a group of demonstrators seized identification equipment from a UNOCI vehicle in Duékoué. During the same month, Ivorian authorities impounded and later released a UNOCI

truck in Yamoussoukro. On 12 March, UNOCI staff members travelling in a United Nations vehicle in Abidjan were slightly injured when unidentified armed elements opened fire during an attempted robbery. On 26 March, a UNHCR staff member was also a victim of an attempted car jacking in Abidjan. During the same period, youth groups staged demonstrations against the sanctions regime imposed on the leader of the Young Patriots, Charles Blé Goudé, in front of UNOCI sites in Abidjan and upcountry. All security measures applicable to United Nations staff continued to be strictly enforced with a view to reducing exposure of staff to criminal and other dangerous situations.

XV. Observations

35. In my last report, I welcomed the adoption, on 22 December 2008, of the fourth supplementary agreement to the Ouagadougou Agreement, which set timelines for the completion, before elections, of key processes pertaining to the reunification of the country, including the restoration of State authority throughout the country, the disarmament of former combatants, the dismantling of militias and the reintegration of eligible Forces nouvelles elements into the Ivorian defence and security forces.

36. I regret that implementation of key elements of the fourth supplementary agreement has stalled. The processes set out in that agreement would lay the foundation for lasting peace and stability in Côte d'Ivoire and would create conditions conducive to the organization of credible and secure presidential elections if they are effectively implemented. I strongly encourage the signatories to the Ouagadougou Agreement, under the able stewardship of the Facilitator, President Compaoré of Burkina Faso, to show the necessary resolve and commitment to find ways to overcome persistent obstacles on this final leg of the journey towards reunifying the country.

37. I welcome the initiatives taken in recent weeks by President Compaoré, President Gbagbo and Prime Minister Soro to intensify consultations with the concerned parties, and urge all stakeholders to reach a consensus on arrangements, including a realistic timeline, to implement the reunification and restoration of State authority agendas. In particular the integration of eligible Forces nouvelles elements into the new army, the completion of credible disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants and dismantling of militias and the full and effective transfer of authority from the Forces nouvelles zone commanders to the *corps préfectoral* should be focused on.

38. At the same time, I am greatly encouraged by the significant progress made in the identification and voter registration operations and I urge the Independent Electoral Commission and the technical operators to remain focused on bringing these sensitive operations to a successful close. In spite of daunting technical and logistical challenges, which were partly addressed through the support provided by UNOCI and other international partners, the identification and voter registration processes have now reached 5.9 million people, which represents a significant achievement. While there are still critical stages to be reached on the way towards credible and transparent elections before the end of 2009, including the publication of provisional and final lists of voters, the production and distribution of identification and voters cards and the electoral campaign, it is my assessment that

the weakened momentum for elections must be recovered in order to expedite the completion of these crucial operations, thereby putting in place the essential technical arrangements that would make elections possible before the end of this year.

39. It is now important that the Independent Electoral Commission, without further delay, make public a realistic and comprehensive electoral timeline with clear milestones. In this regard, I would like to underline the importance of setting clear timelines for the five key stages (provisional electoral list; definitive electoral list; production of the identification and electoral cards; distribution of the cards and preparation of 11,000 electoral sites; and official electoral campaign) defined by my Special Representative, as these will be essential in ensuring the transparency, efficiency and proper planning of the electoral process. The signatories of the Ouagadougou Agreement and its supplementary agreements must, on their part, honour their commitments towards resolving the outstanding reunification issues as these will be crucial in creating the conditions for a credible, secure and transparent election.

40. The Ivorian parties, including key opposition leaders and the Facilitator, must harness the political momentum that resulted in the signing of the Ouagadougou Agreement and must safeguard the gains made so far. Major hurdles have already been cleared through continued dialogue between the parties who own the peace process. This has resulted in restored freedom of movement and significantly improved security conditions throughout Côte d'Ivoire, including the remarkable progress made in the identification and voter registration operations. I am confident that President Gbagbo and Prime Minister Soro, as well as other key Ivorian stakeholders, with sustained support from the Facilitator, will work towards avoiding a prolonged impasse in the peace process, which would undermine the trust, time and resources invested by the Ivorian people in charting a way out of the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire. If they do, the Ivorian leaders and people can count on continued support from the United Nations, and in particular from my Special Representative, who will remain by their side to help them overcome technical and logistical challenges.

41. However, if the momentum is lost and the challenges and obstacles described above are not addressed during the course of 2009, there is a risk of an unacceptably prolonged status quo. In the event that the parties fail to resolve their current differences and the lack of clarity on a new date for the elections continues, the future of the country would be adversely affected and the suffering of the Ivorian people unnecessarily prolonged. Côte d'Ivoire urgently requires credible and transparent elections that will bring to a successful conclusion the current transitional arrangements and give a newly elected Government the legitimacy to capitalize on the gains achieved so far in the peace process and work towards the long-term stability and recovery of the country with the continued support of the international community.

42. Despite the slow progress towards the elections and the divergent views of the parties on how to resolve the issues pertaining to the reunification of the country, Côte d'Ivoire has generally maintained a steady course of recovering from the conflict since the signing of the Ouagadougou Agreement. The economy is rebounding, the Government is now able to meet most of the costs of the peace process and the capacity of national institutions to implement the Ouagadougou

Agreement is increasing. In this regard, should the security situation continue to improve in the coming months, and if progress is made on reunification and the preparations for the elections, it will be necessary to consult the parties in order to determine which areas UNOCI should focus its support. Based on these consultations and the Secretariat's assessment, I intend to propose to the Security Council, in my upcoming reports, possible adjustments in the role and configuration of UNOCI.

43. In the interim, the mission will continue to contribute to the ongoing peaceful environment in the country through its deterrent presence and to monitor and investigate human rights violations, with a view to helping the efforts to end impunity, with particular focus on helping to combat violence against women and children, as well as any incidents that have an impact on the security of the electoral process. I call on the Ivorian parties to develop the necessary confidence-building measures to prevent human rights violations, in particular electoral violence, which could undermine the credibility of the results.

44. In conclusion, I would like to thank my Special Representative for Côte d'Ivoire, Young-Jin Choi, and all UNOCI military, police and civilian personnel for their continued commitment to supporting the peace process. I am also grateful to the Facilitator of the Ivorian peace process, Blaise Compaoré, President of Burkina Faso, and his Special Representative in Abidjan, Boureima Badini, for their tireless facilitation efforts. Finally, I thank all troop- and police-contributing countries, the Economic Community of West African States, the African Union, the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, humanitarian organizations and multilateral and bilateral donors, as well as international and local non-governmental organizations, for their important contributions to the return of peace and stability to Côte d'Ivoire.

Annex I

Benchmarks and indicators of progress in key areas of the Ouagadougou Agreement and its supplementary agreements

1. With the signing of the Ouagadougou Agreement on 4 March 2007, the Ivorian parties assumed full ownership of the peace process. Supported by the Facilitator, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the African Union and the United Nations, the Ivorian parties have made progress over the past two years on key sensitive areas set out in the present report.

2. In its resolution 1865 (2009), the Security Council endorsed the four benchmarks proposed in my nineteenth report, which should guide assessments of progress in the peace process and inform decisions on the drawdown of UNOCI and its exit strategy: (a) the complete disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants and dismantling of the militias; (b) the holding of elections; (c) the complete restoration of State authority; and (d) the commencement of security sector reform. In the same resolution, the Council also requested that I establish a strategic workplan containing indicative timelines and indicators of achievement for monitoring progress under each of the above benchmarks.

3. While these indicators are proposed below, under each benchmark, it is worth recalling that, given the fact that the Ivorian parties have full ownership of the peace process, and the prerogative to set timelines for implementing the remaining tasks under the Ouagadougou Agreement, UNOCI has no control over the pace of the entire process towards attaining these benchmarks. In addition, Côte d'Ivoire controls the financing of key aspects of the peace process, including restoration of State authority, the electoral process and the disarmament of former combatants and the dismantling of the militias, with UNOCI and other international partners helping to meet the shortfalls. In light of the above, the indicators of achievement listed below are to be considered as tentative in nature. They can be expected to evolve in the course of implementation of the Ouagadougou Agreement. I will therefore continue to refine and adjust them in my upcoming progress reports.

Elections

4. As mandated by the Security Council, UNOCI will continue to provide political, financial, technical and logistical assistance to the Ivorian electoral process in the coming months. My Special Representative will also continue to implement his certification mandate, which is critical for enhancing the credibility of the electoral process. The key stages leading to the holding of credible and transparent elections have already been defined by the parties in the Ouagadougou Agreement and its supplementary agreements. The following indicators of progress should therefore be retained for measuring progress on the electoral process: (a) completion of identification and voter's registration; (b) successful reconstitution of lost or destroyed civil registers; (c) arrangements put in place for the provision of security during the electoral process by the integrated command centre with the support of UNOCI; (d) establishment of the provisional and final voters lists; (e) production and distribution of national identity and voter's cards; (f) publication of the final voters list and elaboration of the new electoral map; (g) preparation of the 11,000 voting sites, including transportation of the sensitive

and non-sensitive electoral cargo to the sites; and (h) electoral campaign and the polling process itself, including the announcement of the results.

Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants and dismantling of the militias

5. Under the Ouagadougou Agreement and its supplementary agreements, the Ivorian parties have resorted to models for conducting disarmament, demobilization and reintegration operations that depart from traditional disarmament processes. In its resolution 1865 (2009), the Security Council requested UNOCI to continue to support the Ivorian institutions responsible for conducting disarmament, demobilization and reintegration operations and operations to dismantle militias. In doing so, UNOCI will be guided by the tasks set out in the Ouagadougou Agreements, in particular the fourth supplementary agreement.

6. The following indicators of achievement were retained to assess progress in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants, as well as in the dismantling and demobilization of the militias: (a) profiling and cantonment of 5,000 Forces nouvelles elements at four sites in the north; (b) deployment of 3,400 Forces nouvelles police and gendarmerie elements under supervision of the integrated command centre; (c) storage of weapons by the integrated command centre under the supervision of the impartial forces; (d) profiling and dismantling of militia groups; (e) payment of \$1,000 demobilization package to former combatants and militias; and (f) reinsertion of demobilized combatants and militias.

Restoration of State authority

7. Since the signing of the Ouagadougou Agreement in 2007 the main achievement in restoring State authority was the return of most of the 24,400 civil servants displaced during the conflict. However, the redeployed civil servants do not yet have effective control over local administration. The Forces nouvelles zone commanders are yet to hand over control to the *corps préfectoral*.

8. Based on the specific objectives set out in the fourth supplementary agreement to the Ouagadougou Agreement, the following are the key indicators of achievement in this area: (a) effective and complete redeployment of the *corps préfectoral*; (b) transfer of authority from zone commanders to the *corps préfectoral*; (c) centralization of the treasury in the north; (d) deployment of mixed police and gendarmerie units in the north; (e) deployment of magistrates and court clerks supported by the judicial police, expected to play a role in adjudicating electoral disputes; (f) deployment of correction officers and prison directors; and (g) deployment of other civil servants, including agents of line ministries.

Commencement of Security Sector Reform

9. Under the Ouagadougou Agreement, eligible Forces nouvelles elements are expected to join unified Ivorian defence forces, police and gendarmerie before and after the elections. In its resolution 1865 (2009), the Security Council requested UNOCI, together with other international partners, to assist the Ivorian parties in their efforts to launch security sector reform, including by putting in place confidence-building measures within a broader framework of democratic governance and oversight of the security sector, reunification of the army and establishment of functional and republican Ivorian armed forces and security

services that will be key for the long-term stability of Côte d'Ivoire. At the same time, security sector reform is inextricably linked to the ongoing discussions among the signatories of the Ouagadougou Agreement on outstanding issues pertaining to reunification, including the future of the Forces nouvelles zone commanders.

10. The following proposed indicators of progress mainly derive from the fourth supplementary agreement: (a) completion of negotiations on reunification issues; (b) adoption of all relevant decrees governing the reunification of the two armies; (c) full operationalization of the integrated command centre; (d) integration of Forces nouvelles elements recruited in 2001 in the new national army; and (e) deployment of mixed police and gendarmerie units for securing the electoral process.

11. The matrix below condenses under each of the endorsed benchmarks the proposed indicators of achievement, and will be attached to my upcoming reports in order to update members of the Security Council on progress made under each item.

<i>Benchmarks</i>	<i>Indicators of progress</i>
Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants/ dismantling of the militias	• Profiling and cantonment of 5,000 Forces nouvelles elements at four sites in the north • Deployment of 3,400 Forces nouvelles police and gendarmerie elements under supervision of the integrated command centre • Storage of weapons by the integrated command centre under the supervision of the impartial forces • Profiling and dismantling of militia groups • Payment of \$1,000 demobilization package to former combatants and militias • Reinsertion of demobilized combatants and militias
Elections	• Completion of identification and voter registration • Successful reconstitution of lost or destroyed civil registers • Arrangements in place for the provision of security during the electoral process by the integrated command centre with the support of UNOCI • Establishment of the provisional and final voters lists • Production and distribution of national identity and voter's cards • Publication of the final voters list and elaboration of the new electoral map

Benchmarks

Indicators of progress

Complete
restoration of
State authority

- Preparation of the 11,000 voting sites, including transportation of the sensitive and non-sensitive electoral cargo to the sites
- Electoral campaign and the polling process itself, including the announcement of the results
- Effective and complete redeployment of the *corps préfectoral*
- Transfer of authority from zone commanders to the *corps préfectoral*
- Centralization of the treasury in the north
- Deployment of mixed police and gendarmerie units in the north
- Deployment of magistrates and court clerks, supported by the judicial police, expected to play a role in adjudicating electoral disputes
- Deployment of correction officers and prison directors
- Deployment of other civil servants, including agents of line ministries

Commencement
of security sector
reform

- Completion of negotiations on reunification issues
- Adoption of all relevant decrees governing the reunification of the two armies
- Full operationalization of the integrated command centre
- Integration of Forces nouvelles elements recruited in 2001 in the new national army
- Deployment of mixed police and gendarmerie units for securing the electoral process.

Annex II

United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire: military and police strength as at 31 March 2009

Country	Military component				Police components	
	Military observers	Staff officers	Troops	Total	Formed police units	Civilian police
Argentina						3
Bangladesh	14	10	2 709	2 733	250	4
Benin	8	7	420	435		38
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	4			4		
Brazil	4	3		7		
Burundi						18
Cameroon						27
Canada						9
Central African Republic						10
Chad	3			3		24
China	3			3		
Croatia	2			2		
Djibouti						45
Democratic Republic of the Congo						20
Ecuador	2			2		
El Salvador	3			3		
Ethiopia	2			2		
France	2	9	171	182		10
Gambia	3			3		
Ghana	6	7	535	548		4
Guatemala	5			5		
Guinea	3			3		
India	8			8		
Ireland	2			2		
Jordan	4	11	1 050	1 065	375	9
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya						2
Morocco		3	722	725		
Namibia	2			2		
Nepal	3	1		4		
Niger	6	4	382	392		59
Nigeria	8			8		
Pakistan	11	11	1 126	1 148	125	1
Paraguay	8	2		10		
Peru	3			3		

Country	Military component				Police components	
	Military observers	Staff officers	Troops	Total	Formed police units	Civilian police
Philippines	4	3		7		
Poland	2			2		
Republic of Moldova	3			3		
Romania	7			7		
Russian Federation	11			11		
Rwanda						3
Senegal	8	7	321	336		36
Serbia	3			3		
Switzerland						4
Togo	7	6	309	322		9
Tunisia	7	3		10		
Turkey						18
Uruguay	2			2		3
Uganda	3	2		5		
United Republic of Tanzania	1	2		3		
Yemen	7	1		8		6
Zambia	2			2		
Zimbabwe	1			1		
Total	187	92	7 745	8 024	750	362



Security Council

Distr.: General
13 April 2009
English
Original: French

Letter dated 10 April 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Morocco to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a letter addressed to you by Taïb Fassi Fihri, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Kingdom of Morocco (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated to the members of the Security Council and issued as a document of the Council.

(Signed) Mohammed **Loulichki**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative



Annex to the letter dated 10 April 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Morocco to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

The Kingdom of Morocco has repeatedly brought to the attention of the United Nations the serious and recurrent ceasefire violations perpetrated by the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguía el-Hamra y Río de Oro (POLISARIO) with the active support of Algeria.

Today, it is my duty to inform you of a serious act committed in flagrant violation of Military Agreement No. 1 that has concluded with the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), which is responsible for monitoring its implementation.

On 10 April 2009, a group of 1,400 persons, including foreigners and flanked by armed POLISARIO soldiers, came within 100 metres of the M.18 base of operations of the Berm for the Mahbès subsector.

The group had set out from Algerian territory aboard a convoy of 90 jeeps, 10 trucks and one bus that extended along a 600-metre front.

Some POLISARIO elements, armed with personal weapons and mine detectors, flanked the demonstrators, uprooted barbed wire and removed mines from the Berm. They also fired shots into the air. A number of demonstrators were injured by a mine explosion.

This proves that the operation, overseen by armed elements and involving the use of firearms, and perpetrated in plain view of MINURSO observers, constitutes a clear violation of Military Agreement No. 1.

Furthermore, the action, initiated and carried out directly from Algerian territory, confirms the unambiguous involvement of that country in its planning and execution.

Had it not been for the restraint and the strong sense of responsibility shown by the Royal Armed Forces, the incident could have escalated into a direct confrontation that would have had unpredictable consequences for peace and stability in the region.

The Kingdom of Morocco has continually drawn the attention of the Security Council, the Secretary-General and MINURSO to the dangers posed by such provocative and allegedly civilian acts, denounced their recurrent nature and called upon the United Nations to shoulder its responsibility in the zone east of the Berm.

The other Parties interpret the passive attitude of MINURSO with regard to such acts as encouragement to continue the perpetration thereof. With this escalation, a further step was taken, endangering civilian lives.

The Kingdom of Morocco strongly condemns such provocative and dangerous acts. It calls upon the United Nations to shoulder its responsibility and take the action necessary to extend its authority in the zone located between the Berm and the Algerian and Mauritanian territories, in which, pursuant to the 1991 Military Agreements, no fait accompli or change in the status quo is to be allowed, on any pretext.

The Kingdom of Morocco will continue to ensure that its territorial integrity and national unity are respected, and it reserves the right to take all measures necessary to put an end to such acts, preserve its national security and ensure the tranquillity of its population.

This serious incident comes at a time when the Security Council is about to consider the Report of the Secretary-General and promote the resumption of negotiations on the basis of Security Council resolution 1813 (2008). The incident was motivated by the same logic as other recurrent attempts by Algeria and POLISARIO to undermine United Nations efforts to relaunch the negotiation process.

All those actions expose the determination of the other Parties to stop at nothing in order to impede the process of finding a realistic political solution to the regional dispute over the Sahara.

For its part, the Kingdom of Morocco will continue to cooperate peaceably with the Security Council, the Secretary-General and his new Personal Envoy, with a view to making progress along the strongly encouraged path to a political solution.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as an official document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Taïb Fassi Fihri

**General Assembly
Security Council**

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13 April 2009

Original: English

**General Assembly
Sixty-third session**

Agenda item 34

**Economic and other activities which affect
the interests of the peoples of the Non-Self-
Governing Territories**

**Security Council
Sixty-fourth year**

**Letter dated 9 April 2009 from the Permanent Representative of
Namibia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

I have the honour to transmit to you a letter dated 8 April 2009 from the representative of the Frente Polisario addressed to the President of the Security Council (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would arrange for the present letter and its annex to be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under the agenda item 34, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Kaire M. Mbuende
Ambassador
Permanent Representative



Annex to the letter dated 9 April 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Namibia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Letter dated 8 April 2009 from the representative of the Frente Polisario addressed to the President of the Security Council

On behalf of the Frente Polisario, I wish to bring to your attention the systematic and ongoing plunder of the natural resources of Western Sahara by the Kingdom of Morocco and cooperation foreign interests. These activities are in clear breach of the international legal principles applicable to the utilization of the natural resources of Western Sahara as a recognized Non-Self-Governing Territory under the Charter of the United Nations.

The Territory of Western Sahara and its offshore areas are rich in natural resources. Phosphate reserves, including those in the BuCraa mine, are estimated to contain 1.13 billion cubic metres of phosphate rock. Areas offshore of Western Sahara's 1,200 kilometre coastline contain some of the world's richest and most productive fisheries and, according to numerous geological surveys, the Western Sahara continental shelf is thought to have significant reserves of oil and methane gas.

In accordance with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), which contains the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, the natural resources of the Western Sahara are the heritage of the Saharawi people. Activities which deprive the Saharawi people of the right to enjoy and benefit from the exploitation of those resources are in contravention of international law.

In this regard, I draw your attention to the long-standing illegal exploitation of the rich phosphate resources of the Territory of Western Sahara. A Moroccan State-owned company, PhosBoucraa, a subsidiary of the Office Chérifien des Phosphates, operates the mine at BuCraa in the north-west of the Territory. The mine is estimated to produce approximately 3 million tons of phosphate rock annually, worth billions of dollars in exports.

The International Court of Justice established unequivocally that there were "no ties of territorial sovereignty between Morocco and the Territory of Western Sahara" prior to the Spanish colonization of the Territory.

In addition, the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and Legal Counsel confirmed, in an important legal opinion provided to the Security Council in January 2002, that the so-called Madrid Agreement between Spain, Morocco and Mauritania "did not transfer sovereignty over the Territory, nor did it confer upon any of the signatories the status of an administering Power". In the absence of any such links, it is clear that Morocco has no legitimate authority to exploit the phosphate resources at the BuCraa mine. It is in this context that the United Nations Legal Counsel declared in his 2002 opinion that: "If further exploration and exploitation activities were to proceed in disregard of the interests and wishes of the people of Western Sahara, they would be in violation of the principles of international law applicable to mineral resources activities in Non-Self-Governing Territories".

Given the clarity of the applicable law, we cannot but express our dismay and serious concern at the ongoing plunder by Moroccan-flagged vessels and foreign fishing interests of the Saharawi people's offshore fisheries resources. I wish to draw to your particular attention fisheries conducted by European Union-flagged vessels pursuant to the 2005 Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Communities and the Kingdom of Morocco (Fisheries Partnership Agreement).

According to its terms, the Fisheries Partnership Agreement purports to provide European Union vessels with fishing opportunities in "the waters falling within the sovereignty or jurisdiction of the Kingdom of Morocco". In the absence of any sovereign ties between Morocco and Western Sahara, it follows that the waters off Western Sahara cannot and do not fall under the jurisdiction of Morocco. In spite of this legal reality, the Fisheries Partnership Agreement is silent on the southern extremity of its area of application, a silence which is exploited unlawfully by the European Union and Morocco to allow access by European vessels to the fisheries resources off the coast of Western Sahara. For their complicity in the theft of Western Saharan natural resources, the Kingdom of Morocco will receive a total of more than 144 million euros (€).

The former United Nations Legal Counsel responsible for the aforementioned legal opinion provided to the Security Council in 2002, Ambassador Hans Corell, confirmed recently that, in failing to make an express distinction between Moroccan waters and those of Western Sahara, the European Union-Morocco Fisheries Partnership Agreement is in clear violation of international law. I note in this context the recent passage of Law No. 03/2009 of 21 January 2009 Establishing the Maritime Zones of the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic, which declares for the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) a 200-nautical mile Exclusive Economic Zone, in accordance with international law. Pursuant to this legislation, the Government of the SADR renders illegal any activities related to the exploration or exploitation of the marine living and non-living resources of Western Sahara conducted without its express authorization.

It has also come to the attention of the Frente Polisario that entities of the Kingdom of Morocco have entered into commercial arrangements purporting to grant reconnaissance and exploration rights in respect of the Western Sahara Territory and adjacent offshore areas. As made clear in the aforementioned opinion of the United Nations Legal Counsel to the Security Council in 2002 (S/2002/161), exploration activities undertaken in disregard of the wishes and interests of the people of Western Sahara are in violation of international law. On behalf of the Saharawi people, the SADR Petroleum Authority has protested vociferously against such activities.

Most recently, SADR Petroleum Authority issued letters of protest in January 2009 to United States-based Kosmos Energy LLC and its Dutch and Norwegian-based technical contractors (Fugro NV and Fugro-Geoteam, respectively) in relation to exploration activities conducted under agreements with Morocco authorities. Similar protests in the past have resulted in withdrawal from the Western Saharan Territory of operations by French-based TotalFinaElf S.A. and United States-based Kerr-McGee Corporation. Of further concern are recent revelations that Texas-based San Leon Energy Plc and its joint venture partners (including Island Oil and Gas, an Irish-based international oil and gas company), are pursuing, with Morocco's Office National des Hydrocarbures et des Mines, an upgrade of their purported Reconnaissance Licence in the Zag Basin area (in the northern part of Western Sahara) to a full exploration licence. As made clear by the United Nations Legal

Counsel in 2002, activities pursuant to such a licence would be in direct violation of international law.

As reaffirmed most recently in General Assembly resolution 63/102 of 18 December 2008, the Saharawi people have the exclusive right to the enjoyment of their natural resources and to dispose of those resources in their best interests.

To ensure that the fundamental rights of the Saharawi people are upheld, we call on Member States, consistent with General Assembly resolution 63/102, to take "legislative, administrative or other measures in respect of their nationals and the bodies corporate under their jurisdiction that own and operate enterprises in the Non-Self-Governing Territories that are detrimental to the interests of the inhabitants of those Territories, in order to put an end to such enterprises".

The Frente Polisario, as the internationally recognized representative of the Saharawi people, reserves the right to use all available means, including legal avenues, to prevent and seek reparation in respect of any unauthorized activities relating to the natural resources of Western Sahara.

We believe that it is the responsibility of the Member States of the United Nations, and in particular the Security Council, to restore respect for international law, and to call a halt to the illegal plunder of the natural resources belonging to the people of Western Sahara. This deplorable situation seriously undermines any efforts at confidence-building that might engender progress towards a peaceful solution that provides for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara.

I would be most grateful if you would bring the present letter to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Ahmed **Boukhari**
Representative of the Frente Polisario

**Security Council**

Distr.: General
14 April 2009

Original: English

**Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations
Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad****I. Introduction**

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 1861 (2009) of 14 January 2009, by which the Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT) until 15 March 2010, authorized the deployment of a military component to follow up the European Union-led military force (EUFOR) in Chad and the Central African Republic, and decided that the transfer of authority between EUFOR and the military component of MINURCAT would take place on 15 March 2009.

2. The present report provides an update on developments related to the mandate of MINURCAT since my last report, dated 4 December 2008 (S/2008/760). The report outlines the final preparations made in close cooperation with the European Union for the transfer of authority from EUFOR to MINURCAT. It highlights the negotiations between MINURCAT and the Governments of Chad and the Central African Republic on administrative and legal arrangements for the deployment of the United Nations force. The report also takes stock of the force generation process and deployment of the force, as well as progress in the implementation of the MINURCAT mandate.

II. Update on recent developments**A. Political developments in Chad**

3. During the reporting period, Chadian armed opposition groups reasserted their intention to mobilize against Chadian President Idriss Déby Itno. On 18 January 2009, following a lull in the fighting and five months of negotiations, seven armed groups signed a manifesto establishing a new coalition, namely the Union des forces de la résistance (UFR). The group includes the Rassemblement des forces pour le changement (RFC), the Union des forces pour le changement et la démocratie (UFCD), the Union des forces pour la démocratie et le développement-fondamentale (UFDD-F), the Conseil démocratique révolutionnaire (CDR), the Front populaire pour la renaissance nationale (FPRN), the Front pour le salut de la République (FSR) and the Union des forces pour la démocratie et le développement (UFDD). On the same day, the Union démocratique tchadienne (UDC) also joined, under a

separate protocol. On 23 January, Timan Erdimi, leader of RFC, was appointed to head the coalition. On 20 March, UFR appointed its military command, including Force Commander General Tahir Odji. Only one Chadian armed opposition group remains outside of the coalition.

4. Little progress was made in the implementation of the agreement of 13 August 2007 between the Government of Chad and the political opposition. In December 2008, draft laws on the National Independent Electoral Commission and the Electoral Code were adopted by the National Assembly. However, on 24 December, the Coalition of Political Parties for the Defence of the Constitution (CPDC) issued a communiqué denouncing the new legislation. CPDC claims that, contrary to the provisions of the agreement of 13 August, the National Independent Electoral Commission will lack independence from the State apparatus. The situation remained unresolved despite several meetings between CPDC and Government representatives, and a meeting between President Déby and members of the Comité de Suivi et d'Appui (established to follow up on the implementation of the agreement) on 5 February 2009. During his visit to Chad on 14 and 15 March, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of France, Bernard Kouchner, met with the bureau of the Comité de Suivi and proposed the mediation of two legal experts from the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie. This proposal was accepted by both parties.

5. Increases in the cost of living, combined with a number of austerity measures introduced by the Government in January and February, resulted in significant social tensions, particularly in N'Djamena. The measures included a ban on charcoal trade and production, an intense disarmament campaign entailing house and vehicle searches, the destruction of houses to make way for hospitals and other social service buildings and the threatened removal of old cars from the streets to improve the appearance of the city. Trade unions and other civil society organizations threatened public action, but a proposed general strike in early February was only partially observed. On 14 January, in N'Djamena, security forces prevented a group of women, who were particularly affected by the charcoal ban, from marching in protest. The Government stated that the ban was necessary to protect the environment, but no viable alternatives were offered. Facing growing public discontent, the Government put in place some mitigating measures, including a reduction in the price of staple goods and petrol.

6. On 23 March 2009, the President reshuffled the Cabinet. The Cabinet was last reshuffled on 14 September 2008. Responsibilities for the key ministries were unchanged and the four ministers from CPDC remained in their posts. Ten new ministers joined the Government, bringing the total number of Cabinet members to 41, of which 4 are women. The former rebel leader, Yaya Dillo, who joined the Government after the failed rebel attack of February 2008, was removed from his post as Minister of Mines and Energy.

B. Political developments in the Central African Republic

7. From 8 to 20 December 2008, an inclusive political dialogue took place between the Government and major political and military groups. On 19 January 2009, President Bozizé signed a decree establishing a new Government. However, the political, security and socio-economic situation remains fragile. The Security

Council received a detailed briefing on the situation in the Central African Republic from François Lonseny Fall, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office, on 10 March 2009 (see S/PV.6091).

C. Regional developments

8. During the reporting period, some progress was achieved towards a resolution of the Darfur conflict. On 9 February 2009, the Government of the Sudan and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) met in Doha, under the auspices of the Joint African Union-United Nations Chief Mediator for Darfur, Djibrill Bassolé, and the State of Qatar. On 17 February, the two parties signed an "Agreement of Goodwill and Confidence-building", a preliminary document, which committed both sides to a process to find a peaceful, political solution to the conflict. The "agreement" called for the two parties to refrain from harassing internally displaced persons, to guarantee the smooth flow of humanitarian aid and to commit to an exchange of prisoners. The "agreement" also committed the parties to finalizing a more substantive framework agreement, which would describe in detail areas to be discussed at comprehensive negotiations. Both parties subsequently released prisoners as gestures of goodwill. However, following the decision of the Government of the Sudan to expel 13 international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and dissolve 3 national NGOs operating in Darfur, JEM announced that it intended to suspend participation in the negotiations until the Government of the Sudan reversed its decision. Mr. Bassolé continues to consult with all parties and regional partners to advance the peace process.

9. Little progress has been made in the implementation of the Dakar Agreement of 13 March 2008 between the Sudan and Chad since the resumption of diplomatic relations between the two countries in November 2008 and the meeting of the Dakar Contact Group on 15 November 2008 in N'Djamena. The seventh meeting of the Contact Group, scheduled to take place on 15 February in Khartoum, was delayed until later in the month and then postponed indefinitely. The Government of the Sudan subsequently expressed its willingness for the Contact Group to meet in Khartoum before the end of April. However, tensions remain high as the two Governments continue to accuse each other of supporting armed opposition groups within their territories. On 5 March, the Emir of Qatar, Hamad Ben Kalifa Al-Thani, met with President Déby in N'Djamena and offered to provide assistance towards improving relations between Chad and the Sudan, including financial assistance for the deployment of the peace and security force endorsed by the Dakar Agreement.

D. Security

10. In eastern Chad, several armed attacks against civilians were recorded during the reporting period. The prevailing insecurity and uncontrolled circulation of small arms accounted for many such incidents. Others resulted from tensions between local communities. In particular, tensions between the Zaghawa and the Tama communities in the Birak area (Wadi Fira region) are of concern, as inter-communal clashes would likely result in the displacement of the local population.

11. At least 42 incidents against humanitarian workers were recorded in eastern Chad during January, February and March 2009, mainly office and compound break-ins and carjackings. In almost all the incidents recorded, the perpetrators were carrying firearms. From 16 to 22 March, four attacks against three international humanitarian organizations took place in the Ouaddai and Sila regions. As a result, one international non-governmental organization suspended its water and sanitation activities in Koukou, Kerfi and Louboutiqué and relocated its staff, while another suspended its activities in the area of Goz Beida.

12. On 7 April, in Abéché, a soldier serving under EUFOR shot dead two EUFOR soldiers, a MINURCAT soldier and later in the day, a Chadian civilian. On 9 April, the soldier was found and arrested by Chadian authorities 15 kilometres east of Abéché. Throughout the incident, MINURCAT actively cooperated with the relevant Chadian authorities and EUFOR to locate the perpetrator.

13. During the period under review, Chadian armed opposition groups continued to consolidate their forces in West Darfur near El Geneina. Meanwhile, the Chadian National Armed Forces significantly strengthened their positions in eastern Chad in anticipation of a possible rebel offensive. On 24 March, Chadian Minister for External Relations, Moussa Faki, convened an urgent meeting with the diplomatic community in N'Djamena and warned diplomats of an imminent threat of rebel attack. While tensions remain high, no cross-border attacks have been reported.

14. Within the MINURCAT area of operations in the north-eastern Central African Republic, the security situation remained relatively calm. However, insecurity resulting from clashes between Government forces and rebels in the northern Central African Republic led to population displacements into Chad (see sect. E below). In response to the proliferation of armed groups moving inside the border region of the northern Central African Republic, the Chadian National Armed Forces is reinforcing its troops along Chad's southern border.

15. During the period under review, within its area of operations in eastern Chad, MINURCAT verified 420 kilometres of main supply routes between Abéché, Farchana and Goz Beida and confirmed them free from the presence of mines and explosive remnants of war. In addition, 105 villages and communities, home to approximately 11,000 people, were visited and a total of 3,413 pieces of abandoned and unexploded ammunitions were collected and destroyed.

E. Humanitarian situation

16. Eastern Chad continues to face a grave humanitarian crisis. More than 50 humanitarian aid agencies continue to provide urgently needed food, water/sanitation, health care, protection and education to approximately 250,000 Sudanese refugees in 12 camps and 166,000 internally displaced persons living in 38 sites, as well as 700,000 among the local population. Insecurity remains the main impediment for humanitarian operations and for the return of internally displaced persons and refugees to their places of origin. There have been no significant returns of refugees or internally displaced persons since my last report.

17. In mid-December 2008, following the withdrawal of the Chadian National Armed Forces from Dogdore (Sila region), direct attacks on humanitarians forced them to leave the area, suspending aid to 28,000 internally displaced persons and the

host community. Following high-level advocacy by MINURCAT with local and national authorities and Government-led improvements in security, humanitarian aid workers returned to the area in January 2009.

18. Provision of humanitarian assistance also resumed in the Am Nabak refugee camp in February 2009. Humanitarian activity had been suspended in the camp since an attack by armed elements on the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees office there during a registration exercise on 6 October 2008. Following the conduct of a disarmament exercise, local authorities collaborated with humanitarian actors to ensure the resumption of aid to the camp, which accommodates 16,000 refugees.

19. On 4 March, the Government of the Sudan expelled 13 international NGOs and dissolved three national NGOs operating in Darfur. According to joint Government of the Sudan-United Nations assessments conducted in the three Darfur states from 11 to 19 March 2009, stop-gap measures implemented by the Government, United Nations entities and NGOs were helping to temporarily meet the immediate needs of civilians. However, several of these measures are to expire by the end of April 2009, leaving significant deficiencies, including in the areas of food, water and health. MINURCAT and the humanitarian community are working together on contingency plans should a population movement across the border take place.

20. From mid-January 2009, clashes between rebel factions and the Government of the Central African Republic have resulted in a new and continuing influx of refugees from the north-eastern Central African Republic into the Salamat region of Chad. UNHCR estimates that approximately 16,000 new refugees have arrived, bringing the total number of refugees receiving humanitarian aid in Chad to approximately 320,000. The new refugees, 80 per cent of whom are women and children, are currently living in a number of sites in Chad, close to the border with the Central African Republic.

III. Deployment of the United Nations force

A. Legal and administrative preparations

21. During the reporting period, MINURCAT engaged the Governments of Chad and the Central African Republic to put in place the necessary legal and administrative arrangements for the deployment of a United Nations force. On 13 February, MINURCAT and the Government of Chad signed a memorandum of understanding providing for the transfer of EUFOR sites and infrastructure to MINURCAT, upon their transfer from EUFOR to the Government on 15 March. The agreement stipulated that the United Nations would have sole use of all but two EUFOR sites and infrastructure without charge and for the duration of the force's mandate. It further provided that the United Nations would have temporary and exclusive use of the airport parking spaces in N'Djamena and Abéché until 31 October 2009. MINURCAT has undertaken to build new airport parking spaces for its own use in both N'Djamena and Abéché.

22. On 3 and 18 March 2009, MINURCAT submitted to the Governments of Chad and the Central African Republic, respectively, draft amendments to the Status of

Mission Agreements to reflect the military component of the Mission. In accordance with Security Council resolution 1861 (2009), the model status of forces agreement is in force in both countries to supplement existing agreements pending their amendment.

23. On 27 February 2009, MINURCAT and EUFOR agreed on the text of the Technical Arrangement for the handover of the operation. The Arrangement covers operational issues, force protection, information-sharing, as well as command, control and coordination during the transitional period, in order to ensure a seamless transfer from EUFOR to MINURCAT. In accordance with the Arrangement, the United Nations will provide, within its means and capabilities, reverse support for the EUFOR phased withdrawal, which is to be completed by the end of May 2009.

B. Transfer of authority

24. In accordance with Security Council resolution 1861 (2009), EUFOR officially transferred its military authority to the newly constituted military component of MINURCAT on 15 March. The event was marked by ceremonies throughout the area of operations, including in the Central African Republic. In Abéché, the ceremony was attended by the Minister for External Relations of Chad, Moussa Faki, the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Alain Le Roy, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of France, Bernard Kouchner, the European Union Special Representative for the Sudan and for Operation EUFOR, Torben Brylle, EUFOR Operation Commander, General Patrick Nash, and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Victor Angelo, as well as representatives of the diplomatic community in Chad.

25. At one minute before midnight on 14 March 2009, Force Commander Major-General Elhadji Mouhamedou Kandji (Senegal) assumed operational control of the United Nations force of 2,085 troops. The force included 1,877 troops re-hatted from eight EUFOR contributors (Albania, Austria, Croatia, Ireland, Finland, France, Poland and Russia), 140 troops from two new contributors (Ghana and Togo), and 68 new force headquarters staff officers from various countries. Italy will remain in theatre under EUFOR command to support MINURCAT until the deployment of a Norwegian level II hospital in mid-May.

26. The success of the transfer of authority was in large measure due to strong cooperation between EUFOR and MINURCAT headquarters, in particular the efforts of a joint Core Planning Team under an extremely compressed time frame. The Core Planning Team, which initially comprised 13 military officers, commenced the planning and preparations for the transfer of authority and deployment of the United Nations force in New York on 5 January 2009, in conjunction with staff from EUFOR and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. The Core Planning Team then deployed to Chad on 25 January 2009 to continue planning in theatre. The cooperation established between EUFOR, the Core Planning Team and MINURCAT, both in the field and at headquarters, enabled considerable operational challenges to be overcome.

27. Throughout the period, MINURCAT military liaison officers liaised with EUFOR and all stakeholders in N'Djamena, Abéché, Farchana, Goz Beida, Iriba, and Birao in the Central African Republic. In accordance with Security Council resolution 1861 (2009), the number of military liaison officers is being reduced

from the current strength of 44 to 25. These military liaison officers will continue to work with national and local authorities to ensure effective liaison.

28. The experience and continuity provided by the re-hatted EUFOR contingents has been invaluable in ensuring the immediate and effective implementation of the MINURCAT military mandate. Immediately after the transfer of authority, the MINURCAT force commenced operations in support of its mandate, in all sectors, with situational awareness in place. Since the transfer of authority, MINURCAT has maintained a daily average of 15 patrols and military escorts.

C. Force generation and challenges

29. As at 31 March 2009, the MINURCAT force strength was 2,079 troops, 40 per cent of its authorized strength of 5,200. The build-up of the force will be phased, with a period of consolidation prior to the beginning of the rainy season in June. The force is expected to reach its full troop strength by the end of 2009. Since most troop-contributing countries did not make a formal commitment to MINURCAT until after the adoption of Security Council resolution 1861 (2009), the time frame for generating and deploying the force was unusually short. As a result, it was not possible to conclude all negotiations on a memorandum of understanding prior to the deployment of contingents and it has been difficult for some troop-contributing countries to procure all the required equipment to deploy in a timely fashion. Additionally, the concurrent deployment of contingents is impeded by air movement and air freight constraints at N'Djamena airport. However, preparations are under way to complete the deployment of contingents from Ghana and Togo and establish the Nepalese reserve battalion in Abéché, bringing the total force strength to 3,845 (all ranks) by the end of June.

30. Regrettably, the Secretariat has not received commitments for all the force requirements. Pledges have not been received for a signals unit and, in the longer term, for the rotation of logistic support and engineering elements due at the end of 2009. In addition, the United Nations has only received pledges for 6 of the 18 military helicopters detailed in the force requirements. The military concept of operations requires that MINURCAT possess an expeditionary capability for force projection, for which military helicopters, capable of all-weather, day and night operations, are vital. Given the time required to generate and deploy contingents into Chad, commitments for these air assets are urgently needed to ensure the force has sufficient capacity to implement its mandate.

IV. Update on the implementation of the Mission's mandate

A. Support to the Détachement intégré de sécurité

31. On 7 February 2009, with the graduation of 246 Détachement intégré de sécurité (DIS) officers, MINURCAT completed the training of the 850-strong DIS, as authorized by the Security Council under resolution 1778 (2007). On 26 February, a ceremony was held in Abéché, organized by the Government of Chad, to mark the achievement of the full capacity of DIS. As of 27 March, 667 DIS officers have been deployed to 6 DIS stations and 12 posts throughout eastern Chad, including in Abéché, Bahai, Farchana, Guéréda, Goz Beida, Goz Amer, Iriba,

Djabal, Bredjing, Gaga, Iridimi, Touloum, Am Nabak, Tréguine, Kounoungou, Ouré Cassoni and Mile, as well as the command centre in N'Djamena. At the request of the humanitarian partners of MINURCAT and stakeholders in the field, a DIS police post is planned for Koukou Angarana (Sila region) under the jurisdiction of the Goz Beida police station. The deployment is expected to be completed by the end of April. As at 31 March, a total of 240 United Nations police officers were deployed in Chad.

32. Since their initial deployment by late October 2008, DIS officers have conducted day and night patrols in their area of operations, to contribute to efforts to maintain law and order in sites of refugee and internally displaced persons concentration and neighbouring areas. To date, they have arrested 81 individuals suspected of involvement in serious crimes, searched more than 800 vehicles and secured over 900 humanitarian aid convoys. DIS officers have also recovered four vehicles belonging to humanitarian relief agencies and NGOs, including two vehicles stolen in the Sudan and moved across the border.

33. While DIS has been generally successful and disciplined in carrying out its mandate, some incidents of ill-discipline have occurred. On 6 March, four DIS officers of the Bredjing police post were involved in an accidental shooting during a wedding celebration. One of the officers used his AK-47 to fire into the air in celebration, injuring three refugees of the camp. The wounded received medical treatment at the Adré hospital and have since returned home. The perpetrator was arrested and detained by the Gendarmerie in Hadjer Hadid and a trial has been scheduled. On 22 March, a local DIS commander allegedly murdered a civilian with his service weapon in Farchana. The commander was arrested by the Gendarmerie and a police investigation is under way. DIS has also opened a disciplinary investigation and MINURCAT is closely monitoring developments in the case. On 4 April, a United Nations police officer was detained by a DIS officer near Guéréda. Following the intervention of the DIS Deputy Commander, the United Nations police officer was released unharmed and the perpetrator arrested and detained at the local Gendarmerie. To prevent such incidents in the future, MINURCAT is working with local authorities to implement the full concept of operations, which provides for police stations and posts to be equipped with gun safes. In the longer term, a dedicated room for weapons storage will be built in each police station.

34. MINURCAT continued to face serious logistical challenges in the installation of DIS infrastructure and support to DIS operations. The construction of police stations, police posts and accommodation has not been completed due to difficulties in identifying a suitable contractor and the shortage of skilled labour. While prefabricated offices have been erected in most police posts, many DIS elements are still living in tents. As a result, MINURCAT has agreed to pay DIS members housing allowances while they live in temporary accommodation, in addition to their stipends and food allowances. The installation of VHF radio communications systems is ongoing. Following repeated requests by the national authorities, MINURCAT has commenced the procurement of pick-up trucks for use by some DIS elements.

35. As at 27 January 2009, contributions to the Trust Fund for the Support of the Activities of MINURCAT had been received from Belgium, the Czech Republic, the European Union, Ireland, Japan, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway and the United States of America. The total received amounts to US\$ 21.9 million,

compared to the total budget of \$23.2 million for 2008 and 2009. To sustain the activities supported by the Trust Fund in 2010, it is estimated that an additional \$29.5 million will be required, including \$18 million for continued support to DIS and \$11.5 million for the Mission's rule of law activities in the areas of justice and corrections, which are necessary to complement and improve the overall effectiveness of DIS.

36. Following the full deployment of all DIS officers, a comprehensive assessment of DIS (including the concept, facilities, equipment and impact on the ground) will be conducted by senior representatives from the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in late April and early May.

B. Justice and prisons

37. During the reporting period, MINURCAT developed a tracking system for the cases of individuals either arrested or detained by DIS. The system is being piloted in Goz Beida with a view to extending it to other parts of eastern Chad. From 15 January to 8 February 2009, MINURCAT provided training to 206 DIS officers on the criminal code, judicial organization and investigation techniques, in order for them to serve as criminal investigatory police in the different DIS stations.

38. At the beginning of February, MINURCAT facilitated the first official visit of the Minister of Justice to eastern Chad, to assess the justice system in the region. As at 31 March, 37 of the 180 new magistrates that the Government recently appointed were deployed to eastern Chad. The Mission provided support in particular to the deployment of the Judge and the Prosecutor of the Tribunal de Première Instance of Iriba on 21 January. MINURCAT is also in the process of equipping the Legal Information Centre for Goz Beida and Iriba with computer and office equipment.

39. During the period under review, MINURCAT facilitated the construction of a separate unit for male juveniles in the Abéché Prison, using funds from quick-impact projects. The Mission also refurbished and equipped the Abéché Prison Infirmary, in collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom and other partners. MINURCAT continued to advise and mentor prison authorities on best practices, daily prison administration, hygiene and health care, and to assist the Chadian Prison Administration to develop a national training curriculum in preparation for the impending recruitment and training of prison staff, which is expected to start by the end of April. MINURCAT also continued to support the Government of Chad to draft a new prisons law, providing for a dedicated corps of prison officers in Chad to address the acute staffing problem in the system.

C. Human rights

40. During the reporting period, MINURCAT conducted more than 50 monitoring and investigative missions to villages, internally displaced persons sites and refugee camps in eastern Chad. In general, the absence or weakness of law enforcement and judicial institutions in the east continued to present a major challenge in strengthening the rule of law and in the fight against impunity. Arbitrary arrests and prolonged pre-trial detentions continue to be observed in prisons and detention facilities, which require considerable development to meet acceptable standards.

41. Within the refugee and internally displaced persons populations, incidents of sexual and gender-based violence, including against children, remained a cause of great concern during the reporting period. Twenty-one cases of sexual and gender-based violence were documented by MINURCAT, the majority being incidents of rape. In three of these rape cases, on 2 January 2009 in Adré, on 9 January in the Touloum refugee camp, and on 19 January in Abéché, the victims were children. The Chadian authorities did not refer these cases to the courts. The victims of sexual and gender-based violence, discouraged by the weakness of the judicial system in eastern Chad, frequently do not report the incidents. When they are able to identify the perpetrator, they often resort to traditional justice mechanisms, including amicable settlements. During the reporting period, MINURCAT also documented several cases of early and forced marriages affecting female children in eastern Chad.

42. During the reporting period, MINURCAT conducted weekly monitoring visits to detention sites, including the prisons in Abéché, Iriba and Adré, and the Gendarmerie holding cells in Abéché, Biltine, Iriba, Goz Beida, Koukou, Hadjer Hadid, Farchana and Tine. Cases of prolonged pre-trial detention were repeatedly recorded. For instance, in Goz Beida, MINURCAT found 11 detainees who had been held for between 5 and 59 days. In the Gendarmerie holding cell in Tine, human rights officers registered that five of the eight detainees had been in preventive detention for up to eight months.

43. MINURCAT continued to provide technical assistance to the Ministry of Human Rights and the Promotion of Liberties, with a focus on the preparation of a national forum on human rights, which is tentatively scheduled for July 2009 and will focus on the development of a national action plan on human rights. During the reporting period, MINURCAT also facilitated the second field visit of the Ministry of Human Rights to eastern Chad from 10 to 13 March, which enabled the Minister to assess the current human rights situation and the efforts made by authorities to protect and promote human rights.

44. During the reporting period, MINURCAT continued to receive information concerning the disappearance of children from refugee camps and internally displaced persons sites, allegedly to be recruited into fighting forces. This included: on 6 February 2009, three children, aged between 10 and 11 years, were reported missing from the Gouroukoun internally displaced persons site; in January 2009, three children, aged between 14 and 17 years, were reported missing from the Koubigou internally displaced persons site; and between December 2008 and January 2009, seven children, aged between 12 and 14 years, were reported missing from the Djabal refugee camp. Thirteen other children were reported missing from the same camp under similar circumstances in November 2008. As detailed in my report of 7 August 2008 (S/2008/532), a Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting of Grave Child Rights Violations has been established in Chad in conformity with resolution 1612 (2005).

D. Civil affairs

45. During the reporting period, MINURCAT continued its efforts to promote inter-communal dialogue in eastern Chad. In Goz Beida (Dar Sila region), MINURCAT carried out a number of visits to internally displaced persons sites to

identify pressing issues and enhance dialogue among community representatives. In the tension-prone area of Kerfi (Dar Sila region), MINURCAT intensified its contacts with local partners to encourage greater dialogue. In Guéréda (Wadi Fira region), following reports of increasing tensions between the refugees and the local community received in March 2009, MINURCAT initiated meetings with local authorities. Steps were also taken towards fostering dialogue between Massalit and Zaghawa ethnic communities in the area of Mianta (Ouaddai region). In Farchana, the Mission supported dialogue to defuse tensions between internally displaced persons and the local community triggered by the lack of sufficient water. To help prevent such tensions, MINURCAT approved two quick-impact projects in January 2009 for the construction of water wells in the return areas of Dewer and Khomme (Ouaddai region).

E. Gender

46. During the period under review, MINURCAT continued implementing its gender mandate with a focus on the following areas: involvement of women in inter-community dialogue; prevention of sexual and gender-based violence and provision of support to the DIS and MINURCAT police officers. MINURCAT and its partners worked to harmonize the procedures used to process sexual violence cases and began creating a common database to keep track of cases of sexual and gender-based violence; the database will be maintained by UNFPA.

47. From February 24 to 26, MINURCAT organized a sensitization workshop on Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008) for refugee and internally displaced women, as well as women from the host community in Farchana. The purpose was to identify women leaders and assist them to prepare to participate in inter-community dialogue workshops organized by MINURCAT. The Mission also trained DIS recruits on gender and sexual and gender-based violence standards and, in the coming months, will incorporate gender aspects in the in-service training of DIS. Of the 850 DIS officers, 81, or nearly 10 per cent, are female.

V. Mission support

48. During the reporting period, MINURCAT was extensively engaged in efforts towards achieving a smooth transition from EUFOR to the United Nations force on 15 March 2009. These efforts benefited from the effective cooperation and coordination between EUFOR and MINURCAT and the provisions of the Technical Agreement between the two missions.

49. As noted above, in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the Government of Chad and MINURCAT on 13 February 2009, the Mission has undertaken to build two new airport parking spaces by 31 October 2009: one in Abéché and another at the international airport in N'Djamena. The additional parking spaces will be built through commercial contracts.

50. The establishment and enlargement of the integrated military and police camps in the Mission area remain behind schedule, owing to the pending resolution of equipment and project management issues. MINURCAT is currently examining all options and alternatives in order to provide optimal operational support to military

contingents already on the ground, as well as those soon to deploy. It is anticipated that the camps will be completed by the end of 2009.

51. MINURCAT has developed a phased plan to enable the full deployment of 5,200 United Nations troops, 2,000 more than were deployed under EUFOR, to bases in Chad, including Bahai (north), Guéréda (central), Koukou Angarana (south) as well as to the permanent camp in Birao, Central African Republic. Owing to difficulties in identifying adequate local contract services, MINURCAT will make use of its civilian and military engineering capacity to accelerate construction and force deployment. This will not impact the Mission force capacity.

52. Living conditions for civilian and military personnel in eastern Chad remain extremely difficult and precarious. As a consequence, the recruitment and retention of qualified staff is a challenge of considerable concern.

VI. Safety and security

53. During the reporting period, the security phase remained at phase IV in northern and eastern Chad, as a result of continued and deteriorating tensions at the border with the Sudan, which exacerbate criminality and banditry and impair the humanitarian community's capacity to implement programmes. Phase III remains in effect in N'Djamena and southern areas. In the north-eastern Central African Republic, phase IV remains in place in the Mission's area of operations.

VII. Observations and recommendations

54. The success of the 15 March transfer of authority reflected the collective efforts of the United Nations, the European Union and the Governments of Chad and the Central African Republic and marked an important step for the United Nations in eastern Chad and the north-eastern Central African Republic. I wish to express my satisfaction at the smooth transfer of authority between EUFOR and MINURCAT and to commend the commanders, as well as all the men and women of EUFOR, for their contribution to peace, security and the protection of civilians.

55. I would like to express my gratitude to the European Union and its member States for their readiness to deploy EUFOR. This was the first time that the European Union provided a bridging military arrangement pending the deployment of a United Nations force. In this regard, it would be important for the United Nations and the European Union to draw on lessons learned from this joint experience for the future. The re-hatting of a significant part of the EUFOR troops provided the United Nations with strong continuity, which proved fundamental to a smooth transition of authority and the initial effectiveness of the United Nations force. I would like to express my particular gratitude to all EUFOR-contributing countries that agreed to extend the deployment of their contingents under the United Nations force.

56. I would also like to express appreciation to the Government of Chad with regard to the finalization on 13 February 2009 of a memorandum of understanding on the transfer of EUFOR sites and infrastructure. I encourage the Governments of Chad and the Central African Republic to sign the draft amendments to the Status of

Mission Agreements, which have been submitted to both Governments, as specified in Security Council resolution 1861 (2009).

57. The completion of the training of the 850 authorized DIS elements and their deployment to eastern Chad is a tangible achievement which will contribute to the creation of a more secure environment for the refugees, internally displaced persons and vulnerable populations in the area. For this contribution to continue, DIS is likely to require ongoing support from MINURCAT. I therefore appeal to donors to continue to provide the necessary financial support to the Trust Fund for DIS and also to extend support to rule of law programmes that complement DIS activities.

58. In the near future it will be important to reflect on the viability of transitioning DIS from a donor-supported initiative to one financed by the Government of Chad, in accordance with the benchmarks for the withdrawal of MINURCAT endorsed by the Security Council in resolution 1861 (2009). This will be a focus of the upcoming comprehensive assessment of the DIS concept, which will take place at the end of April and beginning of May.

59. For MINURCAT to be able to effectively discharge its mandate to contribute to the protection of civilians, it is important that its force reach its full strength and operating capability as soon as possible. As outlined in the present report, the Secretariat lacks pledges for important units, including 12 of the 18 required military helicopters. I urge Member States to provide the missing force personnel and enablers, particularly night-capable military helicopters, to ensure the Mission can implement its mandate without constraint. I also encourage the Security Council to urge Member States to provide these assets.

60. In its resolution 1861 (2009), the Security Council requested that I inform it in my upcoming reports on the development of a strategic workplan containing indicative timelines to measure and track progress on the implementation of the benchmarks for the withdrawal of MINURCAT, including the voluntary return and resettlement in secure and sustainable conditions of a critical mass of internally displaced persons; demilitarization of refugee and internally displaced person camps; and improvement in the capacity of Chadian authorities in eastern Chad to provide the necessary security for refugees, internally displaced persons, civilians and humanitarian workers, with respect for human rights. MINURCAT and the Secretariat have initiated the preparation of such a plan, in consultation with the relevant partners. I intend to present the broad outlines of the strategic workplan in my next report to the Council, incorporating, inter alia, the findings and recommendations of the forthcoming comprehensive assessment of DIS.

61. The security and humanitarian situation in Darfur and eastern Chad remain closely interlinked, with instability on one side fuelling instability on the other. It is essential that relations between the Governments of Chad and the Sudan continue to improve. Improvements in the situation in Darfur and eastern Chad also require that both Chad and the Sudan embark on resolving some of their long-standing internal problems and grievances, which provide important sources of support for their respective rebel groups.

62. With regard to Chad, I remain concerned at the impasse reached in the implementation of the 13 August 2007 agreement between the Government and the political opposition, regarding the electoral law. In this respect, I urge both sides to do their utmost to overcome their differences and arrive at a mutually acceptable

arrangement to allow the process to move forward. At the same time, for any reconciliation process to be viable, it is important that all opposition, political and armed, be associated and included. I appeal to all sides to explore every avenue for reconciliation for the benefit of the population, particularly in eastern Chad. In this regard, I would like to reiterate that if called upon by all parties, I would be willing to use my good offices to facilitate such a reconciliation process.

63. During the reporting period, relations between the Governments of Chad and the Sudan were a source of particular concern. Following the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries on 9 November 2008, it is vital that the Dakar process moves forward and that the Contact Group meets as soon as possible. I would like to emphasize that the Governments of Chad and the Sudan have signed a number of agreements in the past, under various auspices, to curb the support and activities of foreign armed rebels in their respective territories. I call upon the two Governments to act on their past commitments and to exercise restraint with respect to their military activities and political rhetoric. I would also like to note the inviolability of international borders and to underscore that any movement across the border by the armed forces of either country would exacerbate tensions in an already volatile region and aggravate the existing humanitarian plight.

64. Finally, I would like to express my appreciation for the work of my Special Representative and Head of MINURCAT, Victor Angelo, as well as all the men and women of MINURCAT for their continued service and contribution to peace and security in eastern Chad and the north-eastern Central African Republic.

Annex

Military and police strength as at 13 April 2009

<i>Country</i>	<i>Military</i>				<i>Police</i>
	<i>Military liaison officers</i>	<i>Military staff officers</i>	<i>Troops</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Civilian police</i>
Albania	0	0	63	63	0
Austria	0	4	108	112	0
Bangladesh	2	2	0	4	0
Benin	0	0	0	0	27
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	1	0	0	1	0
Brazil	3	0	0	3	0
Burkina Faso	0	0	0	0	17
Burundi	0	0	0	0	10
Cameroon	0	1	0	1	10
Côte d'Ivoire	0	0	0	0	38
Croatia	0	2	15	17	0
Ecuador	2	0	0	2	0
Egypt	2	1	0	3	13
Ethiopia	0	13	0	13	0
Finland	0	2	63	65	0
France	0	13	804	817	18
Gabon	1	0	0	1	0
Gambia	2	0	0	2	0
Ghana	4	14	70	88	0
Guinea	0	0	0	0	3
Ireland	0	12	393	405	0
Jordan	1	0	0	1	8
Kenya	0	2	0	2	0
Kyrgyzstan	3	0	0	3	0
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	0	0	0	0	3
Madagascar	0	0	0	0	18
Malawi	0	7	0	7	0
Mali	2	0	0	2	5
Namibia	0	5	0	5	0
Nepal	2	17	0	19	0
Niger	0	0	0	0	12
Nigeria	3	9	0	12	0
Norway	0	3	45	48	0
Pakistan	2	1	0	3	0
Poland	1	2	313	316	0

<i>Component</i>	<i>Military</i>				<i>Police</i>
<i>Country</i>	<i>Military liaison officers</i>	<i>Military staff officers</i>	<i>Troops</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Civilian police</i>
Portugal	1	0	0	1	4
Russian Federation	0	1	98	99	0
Rwanda	1	0	0	1	10
Senegal	3	11	0	14	18
Spain	2	0	0	2	0
Sweden	0	2	0	2	2
Togo	0	7	198	205	8
Tunisia	1	0	0	1	0
Uganda	2	0	0	2	0
United States of America	0	2	0	2	0
Yemen	3	0	0	3	17
Zambia	2	0	0	2	0
Total	46	133	2 170	2 349	241





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Report of the Secretary-General on the situation concerning Western Sahara

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 1813 (2008) of 30 April 2008, by which the Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) until 30 April 2009 and requested me to provide a report on the situation before the end of the mandate period. The present report covers developments since the issuance of my previous report dated 14 April 2008 (S/2008/251) on the situation concerning Western Sahara.

II. Recent developments in Western Sahara

2. Overall, the situation remained calm in the Territory. The Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguia el-Hamra y de Río de Oro (Frente Polisario) marked its thirty-fifth anniversary on 20 May 2008 and the thirty-third anniversary of the proclamation of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic on 27 February 2009, holding public events on both occasions.

3. King Mohammed VI of Morocco addressed the nation on 30 July 2008, the ninth anniversary of his enthronement, to reiterate the need for respect for the country's territorial integrity. He also called on Algeria to normalize ties between the two countries and reopen their common borders. Later, on the occasion of the thirty-third anniversary of Morocco's "Green March", the King, in another statement, on 6 November 2008, announced his Government's intention to transfer power to the regions, which would include Western Sahara, as part of "decentralization" reform.

4. On 22 January 2009, the Frente Polisario declared an exclusive economic zone for Western Sahara, which would extend 200 nautical miles from the coast of the Territory. Upon signing the declaration, the Secretary-General of the Frente Polisario, Mohamed Abdelaziz, said in a public statement that the declaration was based on the right of the people of Western Sahara to self-determination and to permanent sovereignty over their natural resources, and he called on the European Union to suspend its 2005 fisheries agreement with Morocco.

5. The military coup that removed the elected President of Mauritania on 6 August 2008 was condemned by the Security Council. On 15 September, 12 Mauritanian soldiers were killed in what is suspected to have been an ambush by a group linked to Al-Qaida near Zouerate, a location in Mauritania some 140 kilometres from the nearest MINURSO team site, located in Mijek. As a result, the Mission restricted patrolling activities and further tightened security measures at all team sites east of the berm.

6. On 11 December, the European Union Commissioner for External Relations, Benita Ferrero-Waldner, met with the leader of the Frente Polisario for the first time. On 27 and 28 January 2009, a delegation of the European Parliament visited Western Sahara for the first time since 2002 to assess the situation of human rights in the Territory.

III. Activities of my Personal Envoy

A. Contacts with the parties and neighbouring States

7. Further to the call by the Security Council in its resolution 1813 (2008) for the parties to continue negotiations under my auspices without preconditions and in good faith, the Secretariat held numerous discussions with the parties and other interested actors regarding a fifth round of negotiations.

8. The mandate of my Personal Envoy, Peter van Walsum, ended in August 2008. In September 2008, I met with the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Morocco, Taïb Fassi Fihri, and discussed with him how best to move the negotiating process forward. The Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, B. Lynn Pascoe, visited Morocco on 14 and 15 October 2008 for further discussions on the issue. On 4 November, I met with the Secretary-General of the Frente Polisario. At those meetings, I reiterated to the parties my commitment to pursuing the process of negotiations as mandated by the Security Council. I also emphasized the fact that future negotiations would build on the progress made in the four rounds held in Manhasset, New York, and that my new Personal Envoy would be guided by Security Council resolution 1813 (2008) and earlier resolutions. He would also take into account the progress made to date in the quest to achieve a just, durable and mutually acceptable political solution that will provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara.

B. Status and progress of the negotiations

9. In January 2009, following consultations with the parties, I appointed Christopher Ross as my new Personal Envoy. Since then, Mr. Ross has held consultations with representatives of Morocco and the Frente Polisario as well as with representatives of the neighbouring countries, Algeria and Mauritania, and of other interested countries. In addition, he visited the region from 17 to 28 February for in-depth consultations on the current positions of the parties and on ways to move the process of negotiations into a more intensive and substantive phase.

10. On 19 and 20 February, my Personal Envoy met in Rabat with the Prime Minister of Morocco, Abbas El Fassi; the Minister for Foreign Affairs and

Cooperation; the Minister of the Interior, Chakib Benmoussa; and other senior Government officials and political leaders. On 20 February, he met with King Mohammed VI in Fez. In the Tindouf, Algeria, area, he met on 21 and 22 February with the Secretary-General of the Frente Polisario and with the Frente Polisario Coordinator with MINURSO, M'Hamed Khadad, other senior Frente Polisario officials and tribal leaders. He also visited the Smara refugee camp and the 27 February School.

11. On 23 February 2009, my Personal Envoy met in Algeria with President Bouteflika; the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mourad Medelci; the Minister Delegate for Maghreb and African Affairs, Abdelkader Messahel; and other senior Government officials. As he returned from the region, my Personal Envoy undertook consultations with the authorities of Spain and France in Madrid and Paris on 26 and 27 February 2009, respectively, and with those of the United States of America in Washington, D.C., on 11 and 12 March. In addition, he met with the Permanent Representative of Mauritania to the United Nations in New York on 10 March.

12. Subsequent to his exploratory visit to the region, my Personal Envoy informed me that, during meetings in Rabat, Tindouf and Algiers, all of his interlocutors confirmed their commitment to cooperating with the United Nations with a view to reaching a solution to the issue of Western Sahara as soon as possible, as a prerequisite for the stability, integration and development of the region and for the return of the Western Saharan refugees to normal life. He also informed me that the positions of the parties had not changed since the fourth round of negotiations, held at Manhasset from 16 to 18 March 2008, and remained far apart on ways to achieve a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution that will provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara, as called for by the Security Council (see S/2008/251, para. 43).

IV. Activities on the ground

A. Military

13. On 1 April 2009, the military component of MINURSO stood at 213 personnel, including administrative and medical unit officers, against the authorized strength of 230. The number of women military observers has decreased by two since my previous report (S/2008/251). MINURSO currently has three women military observers, from Croatia, Ghana and Mongolia. There are also six women officers as part of the Malaysian medical unit. I would welcome further deployments of women officers by troop-contributing countries, both for operational reasons and to improve the Mission's gender balance. During the period under review, the number of French-, Spanish-, and Arabic-speaking military observers decreased to 14, 25 and 17 currently deployed officers, respectively.

14. During the period from 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2009, MINURSO performed 8,507 ground patrols and 609 air reconnaissance patrols to visit units of the Royal Moroccan Army and the military forces of the Frente Polisario and to monitor their adherence to the military agreements. During the year, the Mission has made greater use of helicopter patrols as an effective monitoring method and intends to continue to increase the number of helicopter missions in the coming months.

15. MINURSO continued to enjoy good relations with the Royal Moroccan Army and the Frente Polisario armed forces. However, both sides continued to abstain from dealing directly with each other. All known contact between the two armed forces took the form of written communications through MINURSO.

16. Violations of military agreement No. 1 by both parties, excluding those pertaining to the freedom of movement of MINURSO military observers, decreased. MINURSO observed and recorded 11 new violations by the Royal Moroccan Army, a slight decrease compared to the 14 recorded between April 2007 and April 2008, and 7 new violations by the Frente Polisario, a significant decrease compared to the 22 recorded during the same period in 2007-2008. Violations by the Royal Moroccan Army included the construction of living accommodations as well as other administrative buildings in the Mahbas and Oum Dreyga subsectors without authorization by MINURSO, and the continuation of building works after expiry of the authorized time period without request for an extension. The movement of a Royal Moroccan Army logistics convoy on 14 November 2008 and of troops and equipment on four separate occasions in January 2009 without prior notification of MINURSO also constituted violations of military agreement No. 1. The Secretary-General of the Frente Polisario wrote to me on 30 December 2008 and 22 January 2009 to complain about the alleged reinforcement of the berm by the Royal Moroccan Army in the Mahbas and Oum Dreyga subsectors. MINURSO conducted an investigation and found those claims to be unsubstantiated. However, MINURSO observed that, in Oum Dreyga, the Royal Moroccan Army had diverted the original path of two segments of a trench totalling approximately one kilometre in length, in violation of military agreement No. 1. Finally, an incursion of Royal Moroccan Army equipment into the buffer strip on 11 February 2009 also constituted a violation.

17. Violations of military agreement No. 1 by the Frente Polisario included incursions in the buffer strip, the concentration of military forces in Tifariti on 20 May 2008 as part of the commemoration of the thirty-fifth anniversary of the Frente Polisario, and the establishment of a new observation post in the restricted area close to Agwanit, without authorization by MINURSO.

18. There has been no change in the status of long-standing violations by both sides since my previous report to the Security Council (S/2008/251).

19. Since that report, the Royal Moroccan Army has reported to MINURSO eight alleged violations of military agreement No. 1 by the Frente Polisario. One report referred to shots allegedly fired inside the buffer strip, and the remaining seven related to the presence of Frente Polisario soldiers and vehicles, also inside the buffer strip. After investigation, MINURSO confirmed one claim pertaining to the presence of military personnel in the buffer strip on 24 September 2008 in subsector Mehaires, which was recorded as a violation of military agreement No. 1. The remaining allegations could not be confirmed by MINURSO.

20. During the reporting period, the Royal Moroccan Army complained to MINURSO about 10 demonstrations held by the Frente Polisario inside the buffer strip, which is a heavily mined area, in the areas of Bir Lahlou and Mehaires. It should be recalled that military agreement No. 1 does not pertain to civilian activities and therefore does not prohibit civilians from entering the buffer strip. Morocco protested the demonstrations as being provocative to its soldiers, who are posted at the strongpoints along the berm and were allegedly subjected to stone-

throwing and insults from demonstrators. MINURSO received prior notification by the Frente Polisario of only 2 of the 10 demonstrations protested by the Moroccan authorities. In both cases, the Mission dispatched helicopter and ground patrols and observed the presence of Frente Polisario military personnel and equipment in the buffer strip, in violation of military agreement No. 1. Most of the demonstrations — which generally involve small groups consisting mostly of international students and civil society representatives in support of Frente Polisario — took place without incident. However, during a demonstration by about 150 expatriate Western Saharan students near Mehaires, close to the berm, on 20 August 2008, demonstrators threw stones at a MINURSO patrol vehicle that had come to monitor the situation and at Moroccan soldiers posted at a nearby strongpoint. Members of the Frente Polisario armed forces who were present at the scene did not intervene. MINURSO formally protested the incident to the Frente Polisario.

21. Also during the reporting period, the Frente Polisario submitted to MINURSO four allegations against the Royal Moroccan Army. Two of those allegations pertained to small and heavy weapons fire near the berm, and one allegation related to the alleged entry of Royal Moroccan Army soldiers into the buffer strip, none of which MINURSO could confirm. The remaining claims related to the alleged reinforcement of the berm. As described above (see para. 16), a MINURSO investigation established that, although the Royal Moroccan Army had merely been undertaking routine maintenance of the defence line that had been approved by the Mission, military agreement No. 1 had been violated in two instances (continuation of building works after expiry of the authorized time period without request for an extension, and a diversion of the trench path of approximately one kilometre). In September 2008, the Royal Moroccan Army conducted the redeployment of approximately 1,500 to 2,000 infantry soldiers from their previous positions at the berm to new observation posts along a line running parallel to the berm some 30 kilometres to the west, reportedly as a preventive measure against the trafficking and smuggling of goods and people. In December 2008, those same troops were redeployed from the 30-kilometre location to new positions 15 kilometres west of the berm, allegedly to facilitate logistical supply and to restore pastures and water to herdsmen in the areas of the initial deployment.

22. MINURSO approved several requests by the Royal Moroccan Army for the construction of new military buildings to include butcheries, cold-storage rooms and generator houses for battalions and units of equivalent size. MINURSO was also notified by the Frente Polisario of the construction of new living accommodation units in Tifariti aimed at improving the living conditions of their soldiers.

23. Over the past year, the parties have imposed significantly fewer restrictions on the freedom of movement of MINURSO military observers as per military agreement No. 1. The Royal Moroccan Army committed 75 freedom-of-movement violations over the past year, between April 2008 and March 2009, compared with 563 during the period from April 2007 to March 2008. They were committed by company-level commanders in subsectors Guelta Zemmur, Oum Dreyga and Baggari, who denied military observers access to command posts in the strongpoints. In December 2008, MINURSO met with the sector commanders of the Royal Moroccan Army to reiterate their obligation under military agreement No. 1 to grant freedom of movement to military observers. Since 1 January 2009, MINURSO has recorded no new freedom-of-movement violations by the Royal Moroccan Army. During the past year, the Frente Polisario committed two freedom-

of-movement violations, compared with 187 in the period from April 2007 to March 2008. I welcome this positive trend, and I urge both parties to pursue their commitment to ensuring that the freedom of movement of MINURSO military observers is guaranteed, in compliance with paragraph 4 of military agreement No. 1.

24. Since my previous report to the Council, the Geographic Information System cell in MINURSO has been working with the Joint Mission Analysis Center to maintain a geo-database of all military units and assets and continues to produce operational and thematic maps for the use of military and civilian personnel. With a view to increasing the operational effectiveness of military observers deployed at the team sites, the cell is currently preparing 1:100,000 scale military operations maps.

25. All nine MINURSO team sites have VHF, satellite telephone and VSAT communications. There is an ongoing programme to improve VHF communications through the construction of new antenna towers or the relocation of antennas to higher grounds. Two sites have been completed to date; the remaining sites are to be completed by the end of 2009.

26. MINURSO continued to produce locust-monitoring reports compiled by the team sites at the rate of once a week from October to April (rainy season) and once a month from April to October (dry season). A total of 21 reports were sent to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations for global monitoring purposes during the period under review.

B. Mine action

27. Since my previous report, MINURSO has continued to expand its activities with the parties regarding military agreements Nos. 2 and 3. Joint mine-action efforts aimed at diminishing the threat posed by mines and unexploded ordnance have greatly improved the quality and scope of data collection regarding contamination by explosive remnants of war. Continued improvements to the level of safety and security of United Nations personnel working in contaminated areas were also achieved through the use of new data, more extensive safety training, revised procedures for emergency response, and, notably, the addition of a rapid-response capacity for MINURSO to deal with mine accidents east of the berm.

28. Unfortunately, the reporting period also saw an increase in the number of mine accidents involving the local population, according to reports (not all of which could be verified by United Nations military observers) received by the MINURSO Mine Action Coordination Centre from a variety of sources. A total of 18 accidents occurred in 2008 (12 on the west side of the berm and six on the east side), which constitutes an increase from the eight accidents previously reported in 2007 (S/2008/251, para. 27). While the increase was likely due in part to better and more intensive accident-information collection, heavy rains during the beginning of the year were also a key factor in creating a spike in the number of accidents related to mines and unexploded ordnance. Notably, while three accidents were reported for January and February 2008 (S/2008/251, para. 27), that number increased to eight during the first two months of 2009.

29. During the period, MINURSO continued to build on the progress achieved in the area of information management with the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining. The Information Management System for Mine Action has been provided to the Royal Moroccan Army and the international non-governmental organization Landmine Action. This development will allow for continued improvement in terms of speed and efficiency in the process of recording data on hazardous areas and demining operations.

30. The Royal Moroccan Army continued its efforts to destroy mines, unexploded ordnance and expired ammunition in response to requests for clearance by the United Nations and from the local population, in addition to its ongoing demining efforts (see S/2008/251, para. 28). The Royal Moroccan Army reported that its demining units had processed 420 square kilometres of areas suspected to be hazardous between 1 May 2008 and 28 February 2009. MINURSO monitored the destruction by the Army of 70 anti-personnel mines, 62 anti-tank mines and 1,644 pieces of large-calibre unexploded ordnance, as well as of 1,500 mines and close to 10,000 items of other explosive ordnance from stockpiles.

31. I am pleased to note that Landmine Action, in cooperation with the Frente Polisario, achieved a milestone during the reporting period with the completion of data collection for a survey of contaminated areas east of the berm (excluding the buffer strip). The survey found a total of 199 dangerous areas, along with 412 spots contaminated by unexploded ordnance. The data will be analysed and form the basis of a report that will enhance the efficiency of clearance efforts in those areas. None of the mined areas east of the berm have been fenced or marked to date; however, a marking and fencing initiative is planned for 2009-2010, if resources are available. Given the difficulty of providing mine-risk education to nomadic populations, this factor alone would greatly enhance the safety of the local population.

32. Between May 2008 and the end of February 2009, Landmine Action cleared more than 2,500,000 square metres of high-priority areas. The majority of the land cleared had been contaminated by cluster munitions. A total of 243 items of explosive ordnance and one mine were also destroyed during the period.

C. Prisoners of war, other detainees and persons unaccounted for

33. The International Committee of the Red Cross continued to work with the parties and families concerned in pursuing the question of persons still unaccounted for in relation to the conflict.

D. Assistance to Western Saharan refugees

34. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the World Food Programme (WFP) continued to provide assistance and protection to the Western Saharan refugees in the camps near Tindouf, in partnership with the World Health Organization, the European Commission Humanitarian Office (ECHO), the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation for Development and several international and local non-governmental organizations.

35. The provision by WFP of 125,000 monthly general feeding rations to Western Saharan refugees continued throughout the reporting period, along with school

feeding and supplementary feeding for malnourished children under five years old and for pregnant women and nursing mothers. Overall, WFP distributed 24,896 tons from January 2008 through January 2009, with food commodities required for the remaining period up to the end of April already in stock in warehouses in Rabouni, Algeria. Since my previous report, the basic food basket has been diversified to include barley and rice, and a wheat and soy blend was replaced with a corn and soy blend to better meet the nutritional needs of the refugee population. WFP concluded a bilateral agreement with the Government of Spain to purchase gofio (toasted corn meal), a staple food for the Western Saharan people, which will be distributed to the refugees beginning in April 2009 in addition to the regular food basket. Finally, UNHCR also provided complementary foods, including 64 tons of tea and 27 tons of yeast, and, together with the Government of Algeria, cooking gas for the refugees.

36. Despite those efforts, a nutrition assessment study conducted in May 2008 by WFP and Médicos del Mundo, a Spanish non-governmental organization, revealed that malnutrition remained a major problem in the camps. Following an inter-agency initiative to develop a nutrition strategy, WFP and UNHCR launched a joint mission aimed at enhancing the impact of their nutrition interventions.

37. In the water and sanitation sector, UNHCR is working with a Spanish non-governmental organization, Solidaridad Internacional Andalucía, as the implementing partner responsible for the construction and maintenance of a water supply system in each of the four camps. To date, a project putting in place a network of water connections, which was initiated in 2007 as a pilot scheme in one section of Awsard camp, was successfully expanded in 2008 to cover the entire camp. There are plans to initiate the same system in Smara camp in 2009, with continuing funding from ECHO.

38. UNHCR continued to support the education sector through the provision of a large number of schoolbooks, sports clothing and uniforms for schoolchildren and teachers, beds, mattresses and blankets for the camps' boarding school, and kitchen equipment. A pilot project was initiated in Dakhla camp to provide incentives to motivate and retain skilled educators and teachers. Support for vocational training continued with a particular focus on women, young people and handicapped persons. UNHCR also supported the training of law professionals by providing equipment and conducting seminars for lawyers and judges.

39. Finally, UNHCR worked with international non-governmental organizations to support a nursing school by conducting training for nurses, chief nurses and midwives. Medical teaching material, consumables and laboratory equipment were also provided, with a view to supporting the education and training of medical personnel. In 2008, UNHCR also helped to build and equip a maternity unit and upgrade sanitary facilities at the hospital in Rabouni camp.

E. Confidence-building measures

40. UNHCR, with logistical support from MINURSO, continued to implement its programme of confidence-building measures in close cooperation with the authorities of the Frente Polisario and Morocco.

41. Exchanges of family visits continued unabated thanks to the efforts of UNHCR and MINURSO and good cooperation by the parties concerned. Between April 2008 and March 2009, 36 round-trip family visits were conducted; and 1,114 persons travelled to the refugee camps near Tindouf, while 1,088 travelled to cities in the Territory west of the berm. Following a new round of registrations, the number of Western Saharans both from within the Territory and from the refugee camps near Tindouf who applied to participate in the programme rose to 41,134. Since the beginning of the programme, in November 2004, some 7,858 persons, mostly women, children and elderly persons, have participated in the family visits.

42. Free-of-charge telephone service between the refugees in the Tindouf camps and their family members in the Territory continued to be provided through telephone centres in four refugee camps. Between January 2004, when the service was launched, and March 2009, more than 105,705 telephone calls were made, of which 60 per cent were placed by women. UNHCR is also pursuing the establishment of a telephone centre in the remote refugee camp of Dakhla, south-west of Tindouf.

43. Following the talks held between the representatives of Morocco and the Frente Polisario in Manhasset in March 2008, and pursuant to Security Council resolution 1813 (2008), UNHCR embarked on a process of negotiations with the concerned parties with a view to expanding the family visits through land transportation. To that end, UNHCR is seeking the agreement of the Frente Polisario and Morocco, as well as of the Government of Algeria, on road transportation modalities.

44. UNHCR is also considering the introduction of additional activities, including joint summer camps for children from the Territory and the refugee camps, as well as the exchange of family visits on special social occasions, such as weddings, funerals and hajj. UNHCR has made several proposals to the parties and kept the donor community involved. The proposal to expand the programme of confidence-building measures comes in response to the frustration expressed by the beneficiaries with regard to the relatively limited capacity of the present programme.

45. MINURSO continued to support, on a reimbursement basis, the implementation of the programme of confidence-building measures. MINURSO provided aircraft, personnel and ground transportation for the programme. United Nations police officers facilitated airport procedures at arrival and departure points and accompanied UNHCR staff on their visits to beneficiaries. In addition, a doctor or a nurse from the Malaysian medical unit of MINURSO accompanied each flight. MINURSO also continued to provide logistical, security and administrative support to UNHCR.

46. The successful implementation of the confidence-building measures depends on the support of donors, but funding is unpredictable, despite repeated calls by the Security Council. Without donor commitment and financial support, UNHCR will not be able to maintain or expand the confidence-building measures, as required.

F. Irregular migrants

47. At the time of my previous report to the Council, six irregular migrants remained in the Territory under the care of the Frente Polisario in Bir Lahlou. Of the

six, five (four from Ghana and one from Burkina Faso) agreed to be voluntarily repatriated to their country of origin and were handed over to the International Organization for Migration on 7 August 2008. The last migrant, from Nigeria, remains in Bir Lahlou.

G. Human rights

48. The United Nations has no staff on the ground dedicated to monitoring respect for human rights in the Territory or in the refugee camps near Tindouf, since MINURSO does not have a specific human rights mandate and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has no presence in the Territory or in the refugee camps near Tindouf. Nonetheless, the United Nations recognizes its duty to uphold human rights standards in all its operations, including those relating to Western Sahara. Both parties to the conflict often accuse each other, in communications with the United Nations or in the media, of human rights violations.

49. During the period under review, the Secretary-General of the Frente Polisario wrote me on a number of occasions to express concern about alleged violations of the human rights of Western Saharans in the Territory, including the use of disproportionate force by the Moroccan police to disperse peaceful demonstrators, forcible searches of private residences, unlawful detentions, and the mistreatment and abuse of detainees. He also reported attacks against Western Saharans by a group of Moroccan individuals in Einterft, 65 kilometres north of Dakhla, on 21 July 2008, when several Western Saharans were allegedly wounded and Western Saharan-owned property destroyed.

50. The Permanent Representative of Morocco to the United Nations also wrote to me during the period under review to raise the issue of an alleged diplomatic and media campaign being waged by the Frente Polisario and Algeria for the purpose of providing a distorted picture of the situation of human rights in Western Sahara. On several occasions, in meetings with senior United Nations officials, Moroccan interlocutors expressed concern over the humanitarian situation in the Tindouf camps, the living conditions of the refugees and alleged violations of their human rights.

51. On 21 September 2008, Moroccan media outlets reported incidents in Smara involving unruly conduct by some youths and the hurling by unknown assailants of handmade explosives at the vehicle of the local Moroccan judicial police chief. The incidents were said to have led to police operations in the area aimed at finding and apprehending suspects. Two days later, Frente Polisario-affiliated media claimed that Moroccan security forces had injured and detained several Western Saharan protesters during a peaceful demonstration.

52. On 29 and 30 October 2008, the Consultative Council on Human Rights of the Government of Morocco held a public meeting in Laayoune with the Royal Advisory Council for Saharan Affairs and a number of Moroccan and local non-governmental organizations to discuss the situation of human rights in Western Sahara. As part of its conclusions, the meeting reviewed the progress made in the area of human rights and public freedoms and highlighted the need to enhance efforts to ensure better protection and promotion of human rights, with particular safeguards for union and political freedoms.

53. A European Parliament mission visited Laayoune on 27 and 28 January 2009 to review the human rights situation in the Territory. This followed a 2006 European Parliament delegation visit to the refugee camps in Tindouf. The most recent mission, which met with a broad spectrum of representatives of human rights organizations in Laayoune, was composed of members of an ad hoc delegation for Western Sahara and of a delegation for relations with the countries of the Maghreb.

H. Administration of the Mission and security measures

54. Security work to bring the Mission into compliance with the United Nations minimum operating security standards is ongoing. All nine MINURSO team sites were equipped with perimeter defence walls, observation towers, security lighting, entrance barriers and gates. Further to the reported arrest by Moroccan authorities in Laayoune of the members of an alleged terrorist cell suspected of targeting MINURSO early in September 2008, the Mission, in liaison with the local authorities, undertook a series of measures to enhance the security of MINURSO staff and premises.

55. Facility and infrastructure improvements continued, both at the team sites and at Mission headquarters in Laayoune, with the support of the local authorities. In addition to the installation of water-treatment plants at selected team sites, the Mission is examining the feasibility of installing water bores at all team sites. Since my previous report, the Mission's efforts for the rehabilitation of desert airfields at team sites has been ongoing, thanks to the provision of engineering capability by the Royal Moroccan Army. Finally, the Mission launched an environmental protection programme in line with my efforts towards "greening the United Nations".

I. Conduct and discipline issues

56. Conduct and discipline continues to be a high priority for the Mission. Although the total number of new cases uploaded in the misconduct tracking system during the reporting period was no more than 27, Mission leadership remained vigilant and continued to pursue prevention efforts.

57. As noted in paragraph 61 of my previous report (S/2008/251), a board of inquiry was convened to investigate the vandalism of prehistoric rock art in Western Sahara, principally in the locality of Devil Mountain (Rekeiz), near Agwanit, and also in the caves located near Tifariti. The board recommended that measures be taken to prevent any further damage, including signage calling for the respect of all archaeological sites. Appropriate disciplinary action was taken against two MINURSO military observers because of their responsibility in connection with the vandalism. The Mission is working on plans to restore the defaced sites.

V. African Union

58. The observer delegation of the African Union to MINURSO, led by its Senior Representative, Yilma Tadesse (Ethiopia), continued to provide support and cooperation to the Mission during the period under review. I wish to reiterate my appreciation to the African Union for its contribution.

VI. Financial aspects

59. The General Assembly, by its resolution 62/268, appropriated the amount of \$45.6 million for the maintenance of MINURSO for the period from 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009. Therefore, should the Security Council approve my recommendation set out in paragraph 67 of the present report with respect to the extension of the mandate of MINURSO, the cost for the maintenance of the Mission during the extension period will be limited to resources approved by the General Assembly.

60. As at 31 December 2008, unpaid assessed contributions to the special account for MINURSO amounted to \$54.2 million. As a result of the outstanding assessed contributions, the Organization has not been in a position since April 2002 to reimburse the Governments providing troops for troop costs in the amount of \$2.5 million. The total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations at 31 December 2008 amounted to \$2,884.2 million.

VII. Observations and recommendations

61. I welcome the parties' commitment to continuing the process of negotiations as stated in the final communiqué issued at their fourth round of talks, held in March 2008 in Manhasset, a position which was reiterated in the meetings held with my Personal Envoy during his visit to the region in February 2009. As it would appear from the consultations held thus far that little has changed since the last round of negotiations to facilitate a positive outcome for a fifth round, careful preparation is needed. In this light, my Personal Envoy has suggested to the parties that one or more small, informal preparatory meetings be held. The parties have indicated their agreement with this approach.

62. On the basis of the four rounds of talks held under the auspices of the United Nations in 2007 and 2008, and taking into account the latest consultations held by my Personal Envoy, I recommend that the Security Council reiterate its call upon the parties, Morocco and the Frente Polisario, to negotiate in good faith, without any preconditions, and to show political will to enter into substantive discussions and ensure the success of the negotiations. My Personal Envoy is available to brief the parties as well as the Security Council on his assessment of the way forward.

63. I welcome the efforts of the parties to clear the Territory of mines and unexploded ordnance, and I am pleased with the notable humanitarian mine action progress achieved during this period. I commend the Royal Moroccan Army for its efforts in the destruction of hazardous explosive ordnance and highlight its request for more resources, such as mechanical and detection equipment, in order to increase the pace and efficiency of its clearance work. I call upon donor countries to support the parties in order to take advantage of the progress and investments made to date. I note with satisfaction the increased cooperation and sharing of information between the Mission and the Royal Moroccan Army and the work being done by Landmine Action east of the berm. Those activities have proved to be valuable and relatively inexpensive multipliers in terms of the security and effectiveness of the Mission and have a

direct, positive effect on the safety of United Nations personnel. I encourage the parties to continue to work with MINURSO to establish direct cooperation and communication through a joint military verification commission and other forums so as to facilitate their work on mine clearance and other issues of common interest. In order to ensure that this valuable work can continue, as well as the provision by Landmine Action of an emergency capacity for mine-accident response east of the berm, additional support for the United Nations mine action effort in Western Sahara will be required. I would like also to highlight the contributions of Norway to the progress achieved to date.

64. I am pleased to note that during the reporting period there was a decrease in the number of reports of restrictions by the parties on the freedom of movement of MINURSO military observers. Nevertheless, I remain concerned that restrictions have continued on the movement of United Nations military observers seeking to visit the parties' units, headquarters and strongpoints in some specific areas. It is the responsibility of the parties to ensure that violations are not committed by their military forces, and I would encourage the parties to adhere fully to the provisions of the military agreements and to extend their full cooperation to MINURSO.

65. The human dimension of the conflict, including the plight of the Western Saharan refugees, is a continuing concern. In that context, I am pleased that the exchanges of family visits between the Territory and the refugee camps in the Tindouf area continued without interruption during the reporting period. Further to the parties' agreements on the expansion of the programme to include visits by ground transportation (S/2008/251, para. 43), I look forward to progress on the determination of the modalities for the land crossings, as this would enable the participation of a significantly higher number of Western Saharans in the programme. I also urge the parties to continue to work with UNHCR and MINURSO to explore the possibility of expanding the programme to include new activities. I am concerned, however, that this valuable humanitarian confidence-building measure is at risk and may have to be suspended if additional financial support is not forthcoming, and I strongly urge the donor community to contribute funds so that it can continue and expand during 2009 and beyond, as needed.

66. I would like to reiterate that the United Nations remains committed to upholding international human rights standards, and I repeat my call to the parties to remain engaged in continuous and constructive dialogue with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, with a view to ensuring respect for the human rights of the people of Western Sahara in the Territory and in the refugee camps (S/2008/251, para. 71, and S/2007/619, para. 67).

67. Given the existing circumstances on the ground and in the light of my Personal Envoy's continuing efforts, I believe that the presence of MINURSO remains indispensable for the maintenance of the ceasefire in Western Sahara. Therefore, I recommend that the Security Council extend the mandate of MINURSO for a further period of one year, until 30 April 2010.

68. In conclusion, I wish to express my appreciation to Christopher Ross, my Personal Envoy, for his work in seeking a resolution of the question of Western Sahara, and to Peter van Walsum, who completed his appointment as my

Personal Envoy in August 2008, for his tireless efforts towards a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution. I wish also to thank my Special Representative, Julian Harston, who served with great dedication until the end of February 2009. Finally, I thank the Force Commander, Major General Jingmin Zhao (China), currently in charge of MINURSO, as well as the men and women of MINURSO, for the work they are doing, under difficult circumstances, to fulfil the Mission's mandate.

Annex

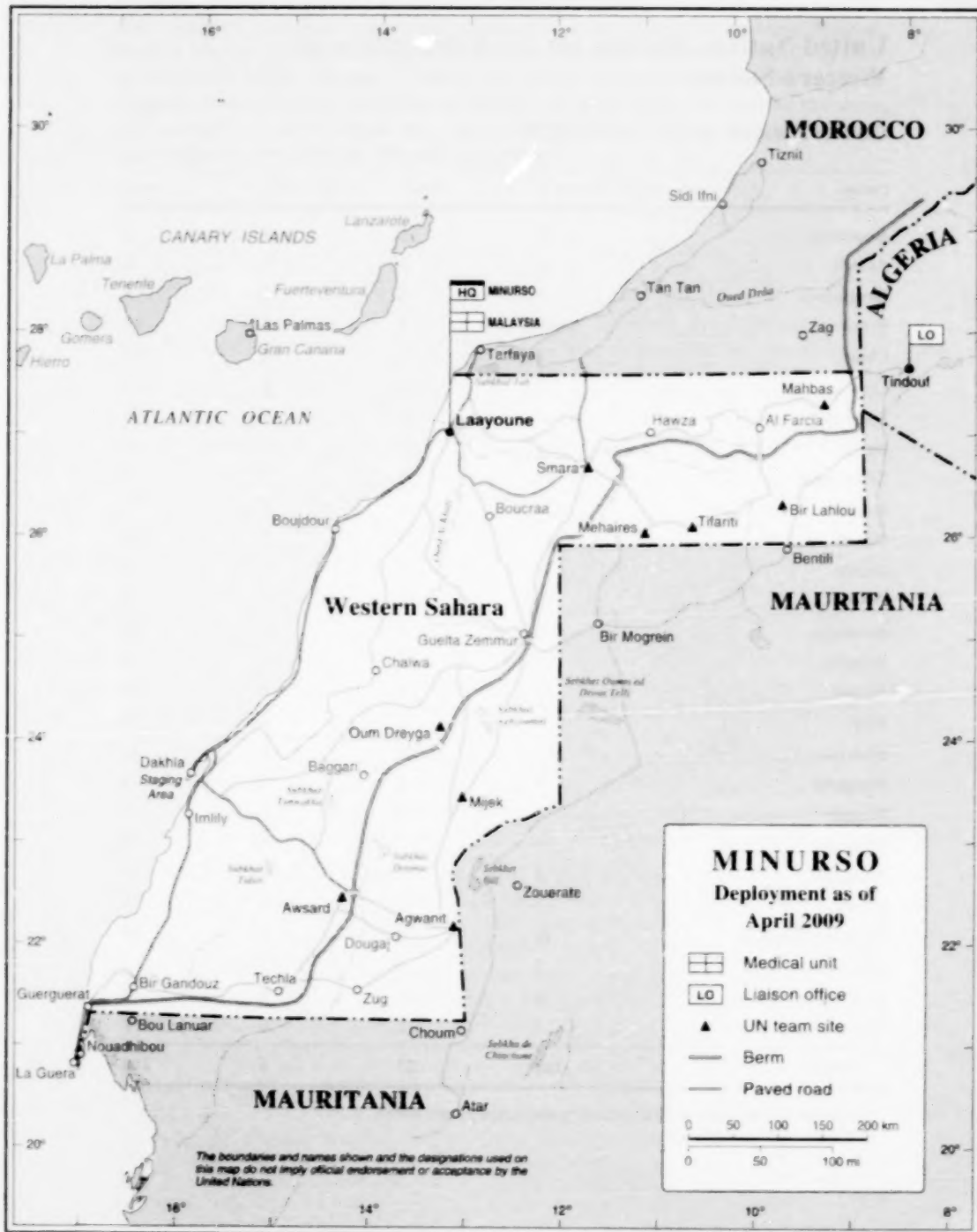
United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara

Contributions as at 1 April 2009

<i>Country</i>	<i>Military observers^a</i>	<i>Troops^a</i>	<i>Civilian police^b</i>	<i>Total</i>
Argentina	1	0	0	1
Austria	2	0	0	2
Bangladesh	9	0	0	9
Brazil	10	0	0	10
China	12	0	0	12
Croatia	7	0	0	7
Djibouti	2	0	0	2
Egypt	18	0	3	21
El Salvador	6	0	3	9
France	13	0	0	13
Ghana	11	7	0	18
Greece	1	0	0	1
Guinea	5	0	0	5
Honduras	12	0	0	12
Hungary	7	0	0	7
Ireland	3	0	0	3
Italy	5	0	0	5
Malaysia	12	20	0	32
Mongolia	4	0	0	4
Nigeria	7	0	0	7
Pakistan	9	0	0	9
Paraguay	3	0	0	3
Poland	1	0	0	1
Russian Federation	10	0	0	10
Sri Lanka	3	0	0	3
Uruguay	4	0	0	4
Yemen	8	0	0	8
Total	185	27	6	218

^a Authorized strength is 231, including the Force Commander.

^b Authorized strength is 6.



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Corrigendum

Paragraph 2 *should read*

2. Overall, the situation remained calm in the Territory. The Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguia el-Hamra y de Río de Oro (Frente Polisario) marked its thirty-fifth anniversary on 20 May 2008 and the thirty-third anniversary of the proclamation of the "Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic" on 27 February 2009, holding public events on both occasions

